

THE
IDENTITY
OF THE
TWO APOCALYPTIC WITNESSES,
THEIR
CHARACTER, DEATH AND RESURRECTION,
AS CONNECTED WITH THE
INTRODUCTION OF THE MILLENNIUM,
TO WHICH IS ADDED,
PIOUS REFLECTIONS.

BY JOHN HERSEY,

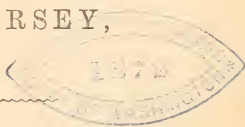
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INTRODUCTION.

THE present period of the world's history is distinguished by numerous *incidents* of deep and thrilling interest to the inquiring mind. Action, effort, zeal, light, increased and increasing light, makes our day as one of peculiar and prophetic character. The Prophet Daniel seems to have had direct reference to the present era of time, to the developments of the nineteenth century, when, by the authority of Divine inspiration, he says, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Dan. xii, 4.

Light and knowledge is being rapidly increased and diffused throughout our world; page after page is written, books are multiplied almost without number, on all subjects, especially in

reference to the prophecies and the Holy Scriptures. Many wise and learned men have written largely, and have speculated extensively on the deep and hidden mysteries of the apocalypse, the closing book of God's revealed will to man.

It may, therefore, assume the appearance of presumption, if not downright folly, for an humble and obscure individual, destitute of literary and scientific qualifications, to intrude his views and opinions upon an enlightened and intelligent community. We are encouraged, however, by the apostle to the Gentiles, who says, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence." 1 Cor. i, 27, 28, 29.

Although the scribes and pharisees, and rulers of the Jews, rejected and despised our bless-

ed Saviour, yet is it said that the common people heard Him gladly.

If, therefore, only a few of the common people (those possessed of common sense) of the present day should hear, and profit by the following plain remarks, our labor will not be lost.

We are not ignorant of the fact that the great Author of the Bible, in His infinite wisdom, has shrouded many parts of the Book of Revelation in deep mystery; and that numerous authors have written and expressed many excellent sentiments in regard to the real design and meaning of this book; and that others have professed to “*unveil*” those mysteries, and make them plain to the comprehension of every inquirer, yet the cloud remains, and will probably continue to conceal many of the great events contained therein until God himself shall remove the covering, or impart more light and wisdom to His creature man than He has yet bestowed on any of Adam’s fallen race—“Until the day when the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be in-

creased sevenfold." Isaiah xxx, 26. Or, it may be, that all those mysteries will not be fully made known to man until this mortal shall put on immortality and we shall know even as also we are known.

We are also aware of the circumstance, that learned and pious authors have not only entertained and expressed a variety of conflicting opinions, in regard to the meaning of this Book, but some of them, one at least, and not inferior to the others in regard to learning and knowledge, perhaps the most popular author who has written on the subject in modern times, has himself expressed different views and sentiments respecting the identity of the "two witnesses," and as a special mark of the magnanimity and greatness of his mind, he has candidly confessed his mistake; thus if once mistaken, asks the interested inquirer, may he not be again in error?

Our business is not with learned men and their theories, however plausible they may be, while we do not intend to follow in their footsteps, we do not intend to condemn them; neither shall

we refer to the sectional and partial occurrences recorded on the page of history, however sanguinary, or momentous they may have been, in proof of the great events connected with the Book of Revelation.

God's word is its own expositor, it is wisely designed for all mankind, and addressed to the inhabitants of the whole world in all ages of our world's history.

We shall not, therefore, limit the Holy One of Israel in the communications He has been pleased to make in the Revelation given to His servant John, to one or more of the nations of the earth, and the limited occurrences which have taken place at different times during the past eighteen centuries. This Book, like its great Author, cannot be limited by sectional and partial boundaries, and local occurrences; but it gives a condensed, a comprehensive and a universal view of all that has, and will transpire among men throughout the entire period of probationary time; and opens up to the view of the purified and intelligent mind, the commence-

ment of another and infinitely more glorious era, or dispensation than our sin disordered world has ever yet enjoyed.

If our views are not rational and scriptural, let the reader reject them. God in mercy deals with His fallen and sin-enfeebled children wisely and kindly ; nor does He require us to believe any thing that is unreasonable, though many things may be above our comprehension in our present state.

Though the sentiments advanced in the following pages, may be repulsive to the wishes and feelings of our unsanctified nature, and different from all our preconceived opinions, and the strong prejudices of our early education, let us not hastily reject them, but calmly and impartially examine the subject, and if truth, and reason, and past experience, and God's holy word, conspire to confirm those opinions, let us not close our eyes to the exhibition of plain truth, however unpalatable it may be to our taste, or opposed to our wishes and desires. Truth is mighty and must prevail. It was the language

of strong prejudice which once influenced an honest man to inquire expressively, in regard to the identity of the Messiah, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Come and see.



I.

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE APOCALYPTIC WITNESSES.

WE shall not presume, nor attempt even to discuss the great mysteries contained in the Book of Revelation generally, but simply confine our remarks to the *identity*, the *character*, and the *fate* of the two witnesses so prominently specified in this part of God's holy word.

The account given of the two witnesses and their mysterious history is found in the eleventh chapter of the Book of Revelation, and reads as follows:

“And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple, leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. 3. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thou-

sand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. 4. These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. 5. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. 6. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not, in the days of their prophesy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. 7. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. 8. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. 10. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. 11. And after three days

and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that saw them. 12. And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. 13. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14. The second woe is past; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly. 15. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

How shall mortal man, he who is but a worm of the dust, compassed about with ignorance and infirmity, presume to look into the deep things of God! O thou Most High—Thou that rulest in the heavens above, and in this lower world, pardon the presumption of thy servant, and grant him thy Holy Spirit to enlighten his mind, and to humble and purify his heart, that he may understand thy word and faithfully and affec-

tionately warn a guilty world, and a slumbering unconscious church of their danger of the things which are coming upon them! May the trumpet not give an uncertain sound, for who then will prepare himself for the battle.

II.

THE IDENTITY OF THE WITNESSES.

PROCEED we now to identify the character and office of the two apocalyptic witnesses.

Verse 3d. "And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."

The law of God requires the testimony of two witnesses to render their evidence valid and conclusive. Thus in the great work of man's salvation, there has been no flaw nor omission; all that should, or could have been done, has been done to secure the salvation of the human family—all that was necessary and could have been done consistent with the character of God, and the relation we sustain to Him.

Inquire we now who are those witnesses, and does their life and character correspond with the description given of them by the inspired writer?

First. The first witness we shall name is the descendants of Abraham, the Jewish church, or

nation. As it regards this witness we notice their office and their duty. They are to *prophecy*. The Jews stand forth prominently as faithful *witnesses* for the truth of the prophecies. In their life and character the verity, the truth of the Old Testament prophecies, are fully established. Their present condition and past history most conclusively proves the numerous and wonderful predictions made in the Old and New Testaments concerning them. Had their former history, and their present circumstances have been different from what they have been, and what they now are, the verity of the prophecies would have failed, and God's word would have fallen to the ground as untrue. Hence the vast importance of this faithful witness, and the testimony they are still bearing for the truth of Divine revelation. They will, no doubt, continue to bear their testimony until the least and last prophecy concerning them is perfectly fulfilled. As it regards their condition, they were to prophecy clothed in sackcloth, viz. in a degraded and sorrowful state; this doleful condition has been met fully and prominently in their past and present experience. So that he who runs may see and read their identity of charac-

ter, and their doleful condition. They are now, and have been for many centuries literally clothed in sackcloth.

We now proceed to examine, identify and establish the character, the office and condition of the second witness, viz. the christian church.

Secondly. The description given of those witnesses, will be strictly applicable to the christian church as we perceive it is to the Jewish people. 1st. Their testimony—they are *witnesses*. Christ says, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a *witness* unto all nations, and then shall the end come.” Matt. xxiv, 14. Again, “Wherefore of those men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a *witness* with us of His resurrection.” Acts i, 21, 22. “And he said, the God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know His will, and see the Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of His mouth. For thou shalt be His *witness* unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.” Acts xxii, 14, 15. “For I have appeared unto thee

for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a *witness*, both of these things which thou hast seen and of those things in which I will appear unto thee." Acts xxvi, 16. "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be *witnesses* unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Acts i, 8. We might multiply texts to prove the identity of this witness, but no one will doubt the fact.

III.

THE OFFICE OF THE WITNESSES—TO PROPHECY.

THERE may be, however, those who may object to their office, viz. to *prophecy*. The term is not only applied to those holy men who were moved by the Holy Ghost to foretell future events, but the appellation is given to those who teach others and preach the gospel. Hence St. Paul says, "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy, for he that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that *prophesieth*, speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that *prophesieth*, edifieth the church." 1 Cor. xiv, 1, 2, 3, 4. And verse 31, "For ye may all *prophecy* one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted."

We may, therefore, affirm confidently, that every minister who teaches others, may be said, in an important sense, to *prophecy*.

IV.

THE CONDITION OF THE WITNESSES CLOTHED IN SACKCLOTH.

It may be doubted whether the condition ascribed to those witnesses, will apply to the christian *witness* in the day of its great prosperity. Let us therefor examine carefully their real character.

Compared with the standard of the Gospel, (love your neighbor as yourself,) and in view of what we should be, it must be generally acknowledged that our condition is a sorrowful one. Our *faith*, alas how weak! Our *love*, how faint and cold. Christ requires us to love Him more than our father, or mother—sister, or brother, nay, even more than our wife or children; but where can such *ardent, pure* and undefiled love be found? If we candidly examine the state of our *humility, gratitude*, and *patience*, we shall find those graces very defective—very far from what they should be. Generally speaking, our spiritual strength, as

well as our christian gifts and graces are far
 * below the Gospel standard.

Perhaps there is no state or condition in society more painful and mortifying to intelligent minds and hearts of sensibility, than family discord. Would it not cause tears of sorrow to flow from the pious father's eyes, to know that his children were unkind to each other, constantly endeavoring to expose each other's character, and unwilling to eat together ! Surely such a state of things would throw around the good father's shoulders a mantle of "*sackcloth.*" And is not discord in all its diversified modifications, a characteristic feature of Christ's church in the present day ? Nor can we possibly suppose that our heavenly Father possesses less sensibility than fallen man. In many instances we strive to conceal, or apologise for this dark trait of character, by asserting that we do not differ materially in the important doctrines of the Bible—it is only in non-essentials that we do not harmonize ; yet this mantle will not cover the wound, and hide the "*sackcloth.*" To say nothing of the bitter enmity which exists between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants, how little real union and

harmony exists between the different Protestant denominations! There is discord—there is a want of *perfect*, of *pure* and *undefiled love*, view the subject in whatever light we may.

No discordant sound or note can be admitted into heaven; nor can old age, or the grave, remove this stain from our garments, which must be found without spot or wrinkle, or we must be excluded from the presence of God and his holy angels forever. This is not an unimportant consideration, it may justly be called a “*sack-cloth*” state.

The law of Christ requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves; but alas how few of us reach this pure standard. In the wise and inimitable form or pattern our blessed Saviour has given us to regulate our prayers, He directs us to pray—That our Heavenly Father’s will may be done on earth, *as it is done in heaven*. To say nothing of even a majority of the church members and ministers, where shall we find an individual that reaches that standard—that does the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven? Can we point to one such character?

If therefore we can find few, very few if any, who reach Christ’s standard—who do the will

of God as it is done in heaven, can our garments be spotless?

If we examine our hearts more closely, we may perceive something more like "*sackcloth*," than the blemishes caused by our discordant feelings, and our fearful neglect of God's holy word. The Bible informs us that thy Maker is thy husband, that the church is recognized as the bride, the Lamb's wife. Let us now suppose a case that would be more dark and disgraceful than a literal garment of "*sackcloth*."

Suppose a moral, good, but a poor man, has a wife who is ashamed of her husband, she will not walk with him in public, but associates constantly with the lowest grades of society—is seen daily walking arm in arm with a gambling drunken man, through the public streets, what character would she bear in the estimation of a reflecting and respectable community? We can scarcely describe or conceive of a more debased character. Let us now candidly and honestly apply the picture of that woman to the church, and we shall find it a fac simile of her character and conduct.

Thy Maker—thy Saviour is thy husband. Behold Him in the *deep valley of poverty*, bear-

ing His cross at every step, and with weeping eyes, and kindest words of affection, He mildly, and expressively invites us to follow Him. And yet it must, and will be generally admitted, that we are all ashamed of poverty, and will not walk in that cold unfashionable path if we can avoid it; and even most of us who are *really poor*, feel a desire to hide it from the eyes of others, nor is there in the wardrobe of life, many articles more degrading than *deception*. Nor do we, generally speaking, like self-denial much better than poverty, hence very few of us fast even one day in the week; yet would we rather fast two days in each week, than we would look like poor people. Very few of us in the present day can measure up to the apostle's standard, and yet he fasted often, and urges us to follow him, as he followed Christ, but his words are treated as an idle tale, while the voice, the command of the world falls with imperious weight upon our ear. The spirit, the customs, the fashions, which constitutes the essence of the world, that deadly foe to our peace and happiness, speaks—commands and we promptly and cheerfully obey, however ridiculous the custom or fashion the god of this world presents, we

smile and follow. Thus we walk arm in arm with the monster who seduced our first parents, and has ruined millions, while we are almost deaf to our Saviour's voice, and ashamed of our wise, and glorious, and merciful, but cross-bearing husband, the Holy One of Israel. Thus Christ in practice is shunned, and suffered to walk almost alone through the valley of poverty and suffering, bearing his cross at every step. And though he plainly admonishes us that unless we deny ourselves daily and follow Him, we cannot be his disciples; and though he blesses the poor and says, woe unto you that are rich, yet are we unwilling to be poor; and disregard the blessings promised unto them, while we greatly prefer to be rich, and risk the anathema denounced on them.

The Laodicean church were, in their early day as much deceived as the church of the present times. They sang a requiem of ease and security, saying, we are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, and knew not that they were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Surely a "*sackcloth*" state, though they were entirely unconscious of their real condition. To investigate

the subject no farther, there is abundant reason to believe that the christian *witness* is clothed with "*sackcloth.*"

V.

THE TIME THEY WERE TO PROPHECY, CLOTHED IN SACKCLOTH.

As it regards the time those witnesses were to *prophecy*, viz. twelve hundred and sixty days, we presume they are prophetic days—a year for a day, which make 1260 years, we say nothing; many learned and wise men have speculated in this field, and have been disappointed. There is no certain data given by which we can arrive at the correct time. There is cause to doubt the correctness of our chronology; nor can it be very important to the candid inquirer to know the day, or the hour, any more than it would be to know the day, or the hour of our dissolution. Our duty is to be always ready, well prepared, with our lamps trimmed and brightly burning, and our garments unsoiled, that whether the Bridegroom comes at midnight, or any other hour, we may be prepared to meet Him joyfully, and thus enter triumphantly into the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Judging, however, by our Saviour's authorized rule, viz. by the budding of the trees, ye know that summer is nigh. The important period cannot be far distant. The signs of the times are indeed ominous; these all speak the solemn language "Behold the Bridegroom cometh." May our inmost soul respond, come Lord Jesus, and come quickly.

VI.

A FURTHER DESCRIPTION OF THE WITNESSES.

VERSE 4. "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."

The language in this verse is highly figurative, and whether we consider those trees as affording oil to heal wounds, or to burn in lamps, to give light, those *witnesses*, represented here as olive trees, are strikingly applicable and illustrative. All the healing balm, the oil, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which flows into our diseased world to heal the maladies which sin has caused, all descends through those two *witnesses*. The Jew is the root of the tree from which Christ, the fountain of all good came into our world, and through the preaching of the gospel by the church, by faithful ministers, health is fully imparted to our diseased souls. If we apply the oil afforded by those figurative olive trees for the purpose of giving *light*, all the light that has ever shone upon our dark world, deeply shaded by sin, has emanated from,

or passed through these two sources. The astonishing glow of light which is now shining and enlightening our world, all flows through those two *witnesses*, typified as two olive trees.

Jesus Christ is indeed the light of the world, and by His ministering servants, and the influence of the gospel, the light is now being rapidly diffused abroad through the whole world. If the light of science, and of the arts so wonderfully manifested in modern times, has emanated, even in part, from the powers of the mind, independent of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, why has it not shown in the dark land of Africa, and other heathen countries where Christ has not been preached or known? Whatever proud and even learned infidels may say to the contrary, yet that great truth will stand out in bold relief, and may be read and known of all men—Christ is the *light* of the world. Take Christ away, and even the Hottentots would sink lower than they now are, though they only receive the light as the gloom of our night is cheered by an absent—by an unseen sun, reflecting his rays upon other orbs, while the rays they borrow from the sun fall softly on our earth to render the darkness of night support-

able. Take the Bible away, and our world would be as dark as the regions of despair, where the wicked inhabitants grope in outer darkness.

The figure further applied to them, is equally applicable—"The two candlesticks." The candlestick does not give, but holds the light. In like manner the Jews hold up Moses and the prophets, the Old Testament, and the other, and the more important *witness* holds up to a lost world the gospel of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, the Babe of Bethlehem, as the true light who lighteth every man that cometh into the world. "These are the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth," to enlighten the pathway of poor benighted pilgrims on their way from a land of sin, and gloom, and death, to a world of light, and life, and glory. There shall be no night there, for the Lord God and the Lamb, are the light of that city.

Verse 5. "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed."

It is known to every intelligent person, that for the last eighteen centuries, nearly the whole world has been arrayed in deadly hostility against the unfortunate Jews. The greatest efforts have been made to exterminate them from the earth, and yet they survive, and will live until they have finished their testimony, until the prophecies are fulfilled. Those who have persecuted and hated them, and would have driven them from the earth, will, in their turn, and in the fulness of time, be put down. Though their sins have been very great. They rejected their Messiah, and desired a murderer to be given them in his place; though they crucified the Eternal Son of God, their Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, and desired that His blood might be on them and their children; yet are they God's covenant people, of whom He has said, "Fear thou not, O Jacob, my servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all nations, whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished." Jeremiah xlii, 28. The mighty God of Jacob has been in their midst, as He was in the bush, as a *burn-*

ing fire, yet have they not been consumed; and the day will come, when the fire will consume and destroy their enemies, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

The christian *witness* has also been assailed with the most virulent hatred and persecution, both by her professed friends, as well as by her open enemies; the fire of hatred and persecution has raged against the true followers of Jesus in almost every period of her existence; yet the malignant assaults of her avowed enemies, and also of her professed friends have not prevailed against her. Her Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, has said, I will give thee a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And no weapon formed against thee shall prosper. But the end approacheth of all who oppose the righteous cause of God on earth, the enemies of the genuine church, the true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, will be consumed by the breath of God's anger, "Fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies."

VII.

THE POWER OF THE WITNESSES.

VERSE 6. "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophesy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

The Jews, the lesser *witness*, possessed of fewer privileges than the christian *witness*, exercised extraordinary power in almost every period of their history, even when they were held by their enemies in captivity in Babylon, and thereby glorified God, and exalted His name among the nations of the earth, until their final dispersion, after their rejection of the Messiah, when they lost their national character.

Moses turned the waters of Egypt into blood; and Elijah shut up heaven that it rained not by the space of three years and six months. Those deeds of power and wonder, were not effected by their own wisdom or strength, but through the instrumentality of *faith*. A comprehensive

view, and an honorable list of the effects of faith, is presented in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where, after enumerating the wonderful deeds effected through the power of faith by a number of Jewish worthies, the author of that interesting epistle says, "For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephtha, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets ; who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again ; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance ; that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trials of cruel mockings, and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments ; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword : they wandered about in sheep skins, and goat skins ; being destitute, afflicted, tormented, (of whom the world was not worthy ;) they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And

these all having obtained a good report, through *faith*, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." It required the testimony of the other, and more important *witness*, the christian church—Jesus Christ crucified, revealed and preached to the world, to establish their claim, and secure to them the glories of heaven.

We are aware of the mortifying fact that the important witness, the christian church, has not now the power ascribed to the apocalyptic witnesses. Though it is said they have the power to turn water to blood, and smite the earth with all plagues, it is not said they will exercise that power. It should be a reflection upon the character of the christian church to be deprived of this extraordinary power, whereas the lesser witness, the Jews, with less light, and fewer privileges retained and exercised it for so many centuries. This is evidently an additional proof that we are clothed with "*sackcloth*," especially in view of the following plain declarations, and the great and precious promises made to the church of Jesus Christ. "For verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed,

ye shall say to this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Matt. xvii, 20.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, and it shall be done. And all things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Matt. xxi, 21, 22. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and *greater works* than these, shall he do; because I go unto my Father." John xiv, 12.

In the commission given by Christ to His disciples, which is the same we act under, if our authority is valid, the power given to this witness, to the minister of Christ's church, is fully established. "And He said unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach my gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow those that believe; in my name they shall cast out devils; and they shall speak with new tongues.

They shall take up serpents ; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them : they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Mark xvi, 15, 16, 17, 18. Christ's authority is the only valid commission we can act under as gospel ministers, in the present, or any other age of the church's history. If we refuse to accept, or claim our privileges, or have bartered them away for the smiles, or wealth or honors of this world, so much the greater will be our condemnation when we shall be called to give an account of our stewardship. There is a great deal of meaning in our Saviour's expression, when he says, "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Luke xviii, 8. Which clearly implies that *faith*, in its legitimate character, in its original, and unchangeable *power*, will not be found on earth.

If, therefore, unlimited power has been granted unto the church, through the exercise of genuine faith, and no direct nor indirect proof can be adduced that the power, the glorious privilege, has been revoked or taken from the church, then indeed may it be said in truth, and unequivocally of those witnesses, "They have power to smite the earth with all plagues as often as

they will." Whether the witness exercises this power or not, cannot change the case, or annul the privileges with which the church—the ministers of the gospel—have been invested by the Lord Jesus Christ. If we have indeed bartered this pearl of great price, this fine gold of the gospel away for naught, the greater will be our shame and condemnation. This subject, like many others, needs honest investigation, and shall be noticed more fully hereafter.

VIII.

THE WAR WAGED AGAINST THEM, AND THEIR DEATH.

VERSE 7. "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them."

When the prophecies are all fulfilled, when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them. This will be an awful, a momentous period. May all our readers wisely prepare for those soul-trying scenes.

We can hazard nothing in saying that the beast ascending out of the bottomless pit, is the devil. His malice and hatred of the witnesses cannot be doubted; and when his chain is sufficiently lengthened, he will commence his work of destruction. As a prelude to this dreadful drama, he will, no doubt, diffuse widely the spirit of infidelity. The events and circum-

stances which have been transpiring for the last half century, has been admirably calculated to induce, and diffuse a spirit of infidelity abroad in the earth. The divisions and discord which has attended the different branches of the church for many years must increase the power of the beast, and result in ruinous consequences.

Union and *purity* is life, and imparts strength; division and discord, is death. Almost every branch of the church has been visited, and sun-dered by the invisible hand of the beast—the demon of discord. Even the mild, peaceable *Friends*, the Quakers, so called, have not escaped this malaria, they have been riven asunder, and fierce contention and strife has arisen among them.

The Methodist Episcopal Church has suffered loss and pain from the spirit of confusion and discord, and within a few years past has been divided into two nearly equal parts; nor has the unholy fire ceased to burn within her bosom, and agitate her borders. The Presbyterian, the Baptist, the Episcopal, and nearly every branch of the Protestant church has been visited by this unholy demon.

The different factions and isms that have risen up in great numbers, all point to the same

ruinous result, all directly calculated to engender and promote a spirit of infidelity, and strengthen the beast for his last fatal conflict.

Mormonism, and mesmerism, and spiritualism all belong to the same army, commanded by different officers, and battling under different colors. Under different guises, he is now marshaling his hosts for the last conflict between light and darkness—for the battle of Armageddon—the great day of God's wrath. May the trumpet not give an uncertain sound—may we not be ignorant of Satan's devices, but stand firmly on the Lord's side, nor permit the beast to place his mark either on our forehead, or in our hand.

Our text says, the *witnesses* shall be slain—must be *killed*. Hence we conclude, that the present organization of the churches will be overthrown—“*killed*.” This, most of our readers will not be willing to believe. It is very difficult, if not impracticable, to persuade any man, or any set of men to believe that which they do not wish to believe.

The Jews in their prosperity were altogether unwilling to believe that their nation, and their beloved temple, would be abandoned of God, and overthrown—that they would be dispersed

over the whole world, a proverb and a bye-word for their enemies, though their own prophets had plainly declared that such would be the case.

We, as christians, should act more wisely, by carefully examining our position, and our danger, and in time confess and forsake our sins, that in the general conflict we may be found among the Noahs and the Lots, that we may stand before the Son of Man and escape those things which are coming upon our sin-defiled world.

Let us, therefore, candidly and honestly examine the probability, nay the unmistakable evidences that an awful overthrow will be the certain doom of the *witnesses*—of the *impure*—the *unholy church*. We should not shut our eyes to truth, nor hide from danger behind the mouldering walls of a house daubed with untempered mortar—then, indeed, great will be the fall.

The first proof we shall furnish in confirmation of this dreadful conflict, of the death of the witnesses, shall be from our blessed Saviour's own lips. He says, "A house divided against itself *cannot stand*." Surely no one will pre-

tend to deny the fact, that the church is *divided*, the evidence is so glaring that he that runs may read, and if Christ's words be true, the church in its present condition cannot stand. The Lord Jesus says again, "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be: for as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating, and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." Matt. xxiv, 37, 38, 39. Again, "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all; even thus shall it be when the Son of Man is revealed." Luke xvii, 28, 29, 30. "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth, distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they

see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And He spake to them a parable, behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of yourselves that summer is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled." (That people, the Jews, as a separate and distinct people, have not yet passed away, nor will they, until Christ's kingdom shall be set up on earth in universal triumph and glory.) "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares, for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Luke xxi, 25 to 35.

Those solemn and awful scenes cannot refer to the final consummation of all things, the day of final judgment, as many suppose they do, for the plain reason that there is a day promised when all shall know the Lord from the least unto the greatest, when it will be no longer necessary for one to teach another, because all shall be holy and happy—a day when the lion

and the lamb shall lie down together, when nothing shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain. After this glorious period, it is not possible that all shall become corrupt as were the antideluvians, and the Sodomites.

The holy scriptures abound with plain descriptions of the awful scenes which will precede and accompany the death of the *witnesses*. We will advert to a few more passages which point to that momentous period; as the churches will, no doubt, be very unwilling to believe that God will cast them off, and overthrow the present constituted state of things.

“For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” Malachi iv, 1.

Commentators have supposed that this prediction was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of that people among their enemies; but this cannot be correct, for one plain reason, that *all the proud*, and all the *wicked*, were not then destroyed, which the prediction unequivocally says shall be done. The

apostle to the gentiles, in his first letter to the church at Thessalonica, and, it is presumable in reply to an inquiry made by that church in regard to the time when Christ would establish His kingdom on earth in universal triumph and glory, says : "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you, for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." 1 Thess. v, 1, 2, 3, 4. And in his second letter to the same church, he says : "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when he shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." 2 Thess. i, 7, 8, 9, 10. The above passage may be considered irrelevant,

because it said that the Lord Jesus shall inflict the fatal blow, and in the account of the death of the witnesses, it said the *beast* shall kill them. It is well known that the Almighty frequently uses the wicked as His sword, thus what they do, may, in one important sense, be attributed to God. Hence it is said that God moved David to number the Israelites. 2 Samuel, xxiv, 1. And again it is said of the same transaction, that Satan provoked David to do this deed, 1 Chron. xxi, 1.

There are many passages in the Book of Revelation which point to the awful scenes, or the day under consideration ; we shall advert to a few of them. "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, if any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of His indignation ; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the

Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”
Rev. xiv, 8, 9, 10, 11.

The term Babylon applies to the fallen or corrupt church, not only to the Roman Catholic church, but to every branch of the church bearing the mark of the beast, viz. *sin* in its most modified and modern forms—either *pride*, or *transgression*, or *the love of the world*, or *unbelief*. And, alas! where shall we find, even among Protestants, a church or people entirely free from all those dark traits—the mark of the beast?

O how few among the best of us, fear God and keep all His commandments always, who feel no fear of man—who have the mind and spirit of Jesus—no stain or blemish—no conformity to the spirit, the fashions and customs of this ungodly world. Wherever any of these traits of sin are found, whether openly in our foreheads, or concealed in our hand, all such must fall.

That dreadful day is more vividly and awfully described in the same chapter: “And another

angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and he cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, thrust in thy sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the *great wine press of the wrath of God*. And the wine press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine press, even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." Verse 18, 19, 20.

CHRIST'S COMING.

The following declaration and exclamation, from the mouth of the inspired, the evangelical Prophet, is strikingly descriptive of Christ's first and second coming, and of the momentous scenes which will immediately precede the introduction and establishment of Christ's triumphant kingdom on earth—the millennial morn, when God's will shall be done universally on earth, as it is done in heaven. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?

I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore, mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth." Isaiah lxiii, 1-6.

The above strong and awfully descriptive language cannot refer exclusively to Christ's first coming—to his incarnation and crucifixion; but it refers to and includes His final triumph, and points unequivocally to the battle of Armageddon, the great day of God's wrath—to the death and resurrection of the two witnesses—to the introduction of the glorious day of the millennium—when the great work of

man's redemption will be consummated in triumphant glory. Our inmost soul should cry out, come Lord Jesus, and come quickly.

The solemn, the thrilling scenes described in those numerous and alarming passages of God's holy word, doubtless, point to the death of the two witnesses. Those events cannot refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, because this book was written after that period, and those descriptions are too strong and comprehensive to have received their fulfilment in the overthrow of that nation : nor can they refer to the final judgment day—the consummation of all things beneath the sun, for the plain reason that God, who cannot lie, has promised that the earth shall be renovated, and filled with righteousness, after which it is not reasonable to suppose that such a universal state of depravity could exist, as those passages plainly intimate, shall be found at the time adverted to. And to suppose that they received their fulfillment in the overthrow of one, or more of the nations of the earth, at any period since the introduction of the gospel into our world is equally absurd. None of those scenes meet the magnitude of the case, and they have been so numerous and vague, that almost every writer on the subject in modern times,

has given them different applications, according with his own views and opinions. We, therefore, confidently believe, that the death of those witnesses is yet to be realized—is still in the eventful future, and should make a deep and solemn impression upon the heart and mind of every member of the church, not only in the corrupt Roman Catholic, but also in every branch of the Protestant church. We should cease to contend and persecute each other. Our prejudice should be laid aside, because it is evidently a mark of the beast, and cannot be admitted into heaven.

Our inquiry should be, are our own garments white and clean? Are our own hearts *pure* and *holy*; free from pride or prejudice, or wilful transgression, or any other mark of the beast even in our hand? Have we the wedding garment on, and are we anxiously and momentarily looking for and ardently desiring the approach of the Bridegroom? When the Master comes, it will then be too late to correct our errors, or secure gospel privileges. It will then be said, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

IX.

THE PLACE WHERE THE WITNESSES WERE SLAIN.

VERSE 8th. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."

It is presumable and reasonable to suppose that their maladies will be of a spiritual nature, and their death a spiritual death, which will be infinitely more painful and degrading than a literal death could be. In death literal the struggle is soon over, and surviving friends soon forget what was at the time an almost insupportable bereavement. But not so a spiritual death; the pain—the shame—the stigma remains an indelible blot upon these unfortunate witnesses.

The place where this awful scene is to be exhibited, is called, spiritually, *Sodom and Egypt*, where also our *Lord was crucified*. Our blessed Saviour was not crucified literally either in Sodom or Egypt, but where they had all the abominations of those devoted places. It will

be prudent and profitable now to examine *carefully* and *candidly* this fearful subject, which may give us some idea of the extent of the predicted malady, and where the tragedy will be performed, and also who will be the victims. The place specified is, "*where our Lord was crucified.*" Spiritual sufferings are more painful than those of a literal, mental or physical character. It will, therefore, be transacted where Christ has been *spiritually crucified*, and all who are found guilty of the awful crime, and have not repented, will be the sufferers in the dreadful scene.

Let us now inquire honestly how we may crucify Christ *spiritually*. To ascertain this momentous fact correctly, we must examine carefully the circumstances connected with the crucifixion of our Saviour in Judea. Christ says himself, "No man taketh my life from me, I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

All the powers of darkness combined, with all the wicked men on earth, could not have taken Christ's life—could not have slain Him. It was sin that caused His death, and every wilful sin we commit, we drive the nails, (spiritually,)

afresh into his hands, and the act cries aloud in God, the Father's ear, *crucify Him, crucify Him!* Thus we may perceive that the Lord Jesus is crucified *spiritually*, every day and in every part of christendom where the gospel has been published, and preached in our christian land.

The heathen world have not been guilty of this awful act of cruelty; they indeed, like the wicked Jews, are sinners before God, yet they know not what they do; but with our eyes open, and the New Testament in our hands, we wilfully and thoughtlessly act our part in crucifying the Son of God! Now this solemn and awful fact, (if the book of God was silent on the subject,) should admonish us of our danger, and warn us of our approaching doom; that we are drawing near to that momentous period of our world's history when the *witnesses* will be slain, when the present confused and discordant state of things will be overturned and put down. It is called in the bible by different names, such as, The battle of Armageddon—The great day of God's wrath—The Lord's controversy for Zion. It will, no doubt, be the last conflict between the opposing powers of *light* and *darkness*.

It behooves us, therefore, to look well into our own hearts, that we may not be implicated in this cruel crime, and fall like the antideluvians, and the wicked Sodomites. That we may not be numbered with the enemies of Christ, and betray Him with a kiss; this we may do when we make a profession of religion, and wish to gain the applause of man. That we may not be like the traitor who betrayed his Master for a few pieces of silver. This we virtually do when we love money—when we swerve from the high and honorable principles of truth and righteousness for the sake of gain, or when we have one desire in our heart to procure any article for less than its real value, or when we are willing to take more for an article than it is really worth. Every unjust person must fall when the witnesses are slain.

Every child that takes his father's money without his permission, is *guilty*, is *unjust*. As the silver and gold all belongs to our heavenly Father, do we always ask his permission, when we use his money, however small the amount? Our souls and our bodies belong to God. He says, Son give me thy heart? If we keep back any part of our affections, and place them in

part upon gold, or silver, or the honors and pleasures of this world, we defraud the Divine Being, and become desperately unjust.

In our dealings and transactions with our fellow beings, do we act as justly and as conscientiously as a friend of ours, who sold an article at auction which was bid off for more than its real value. In his settlement our friend informed the purchaser that he had given too much for the carriage; it was made, said he, in my own shop, and I know its value, and can receive no more for it. God loves a just and honorable man, and he shall be safe when the world is burned up.

Our blessed Saviour says, "He that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much." Nor can any shade of injustice, (any more than pride, or the love of the world,) be admitted into heaven. When a man is convicted of a crime, he is from that moment *morally dead*—dead in the estimation of all good and honorable men. Thus will it be when the witnesses are slain. Their real character will be clearly developed and exposed to the eye of every individual in the open streets. He will be exposed to disgrace, public ridicule and contempt. The real

character of the witnesses will be ascertained by the application of the measuring reed adverted to in the 1st and 2d verses of the chapter which records their character and doom. That reed or rod may be called God's holy word, with the light of the Holy Spirit shining upon every page and every word.

Christ has unequivocally said, "He that believeth not shall be damned," and asks the important question, "How can ye believe who receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?"

And yet many of us, willingly and joyfully receive honor of our fellow mortals—we are not afraid to be called, *Rabbi*, Rev., Right Rev., D. D., or Professor, &c.

On the other hand, very few of us are willing, as our Divine Master has directed us to take the lowest seat when we are bidden to a feast. When traveling in the cars, we are not generally willing to take the second class car among the poor, though our Divine Master was numbered among the transgressors, and publicly proclaimed His own poverty; nor was He ashamed to associate with the poor of the land. Now the Lord knoweth the proud afar off, and they are an abomina-

tion in His sight. We notice these things that our friends, and those who may condescend to read these pages, may not be deceived, either in the estimation of their own character, nor be ignorant of the true condition and certain prospects of the church, the prominent and most important witness in the premises.

This is the more necessary and important as the Lord's prophet has said, "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" And the Lord Jesus has said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity." Matt. vii, 21, 22, 23.

Thus from our Lord's own words, many who have preached the gospel, and sinners have been converted through their instrumentality, will be deceived and carry their delusions into the eternal world.

Therefore we cannot be too careful in the investigation of our own character, in applying the measuring reed to our hearts honestly and faithfully, that we may measure fully up to the gospel standard, and inwardly digest, and thoroughly weigh all our thoughts, words and actions in the scale of truth and righteousness.

X.

THE DISGRACE AND CONTEMPT CAST UPON THE WITNESSES.

VERSE 9. "And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead' bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves."

"And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations." This statement affords evidence that these two witnesses were not simply two faithful servants of God raised up from time to time to testify to the truth of the gospel; neither can they be the Old and New Testaments, but the Jews, and the christian church scattered abroad throughout the world. The people generally, shall see them conquered by the beast, and their nakedness exposed to public view; nor will they (their enemies) suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves, viz. to be concealed. Could they be hid in their difficulties, in their fallen and degraded condition, it would be a partial relief, a drop of water to cool their

parched tongues; but even this mercy will be denied them; and literally for the space of three days and a half, (three years and a half,) which will probably be the duration of their extreme sufferings, their death-like condition, when no pity will be felt for them nor sympathy expressed for their sorrows, *“and their dead bodies shall not be put in graves.”*

The Lord's prophet Jeremiah has pointed to this awful period, with the precision and certainty of a faithful historian. “For lo I begin to bring evil on the city, (Jerusalem,) which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished, (ye Gentiles, the christian church,) ye shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts. Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, the Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation; He shall mightily roar upon his habitation; He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations; He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. Thus

saith the Lord of hosts, behold evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor *buried*; they shall be as dung upon the ground." Jer. xxv, 29—33.

Language could not be made stronger, nor could words more fully specify and confirm the awful death of those witnesses. Another prophet has also pointed to this momentous event in plain unmistakable language, and also to the intimate connection that exists between those scenes and the introduction of the millennial morning—the universal sabbath promised to fallen, restless man. "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey, for my determination is to gather the *nations*, that I may assemble the *kingdoms*, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent." Zephaniah iii, 8, 9.

This prophet then addresses himself to the Jewish *witness*, the natural descendants of Abraham, in the most consoling and triumphant language, "Sing, O daughter of Zion, shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, He hath cast out thine enemy; the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see *evil any more*. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; and to Zion, let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in his love, He will joy over thee with singing. I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold at that time I will undo all that afflict thee; and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you; for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord." iii, 14—20.

From the strong language of scripture, both in the Old and New Testaments, it is presumable that the triumphs of infidelity will be so complete over those witnesses for a little season, viz. three years and a half, that they will not be able even to avoid their enemies' scorn and contempt. "They will not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves."

XI.

THE JOY THEIR ENEMIES FEEL, ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR DEATH.

VERSE 10. "And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because those two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth."

The spirit and feelings, manifested on account of their victory in the defeat and death of their enemies, those two witnesses, are perfectly natural in our fallen world. It is the same feeling which influenced the priesthood, and the Catholic church on the occasion of the massacre of the Protestants, in Paris. A scene of horror and outrage which should have caused fiends to blush and weep; yet those poor misguided, deceived, and so called, christians, rejoiced with exceeding great joy; illuminated their city, and villages, and caused their rejoicings to be heard throughout the kingdom. So will it be when infidelity, the beast, triumphs over christianity.

XII.

THEIR ENEMIES REJOICE, BECAUSE THOSE WITNESSES TORMENTED THOSE THAT DWELT ON THE EARTH.

“THEY sent gifts one to another because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.” They tormented them by preaching the terrors of the law, by threatening the wicked with the torments of hell, with eternal punishment. Notwithstanding these witnesses had in a great measure lost the life and power of religion, the *spirit* and *purity* of the gospel, the meek and lowly and self-denying spirit of Jesus Christ, and were clothed in sackcloth, yet they proclaimed the general principles of the gospel, which condemn sin and vice of every kind; this rendered them the objects of the implacable hatred and enmity of wicked and ungodly men; their own consciences condemned them in view of gospel truth. They were not only tormented in this way, but those two witnesses harassed and tormented them by an importunate and incessant application for their

money; thus they were glad to see them put down, and willingly joined in effecting their overthrow.

That the servants of the Lord Jesus, might be less oppressive to their friends and benefactors, and more independent and honorable in their own character, our Divine Master expressly enjoined upon all His followers, a rigid course of economy and self-denial, and says, "Except ye deny yourselves, and take up your cross daily, *and follow me*, ye cannot be my disciples." But in those last days they had greatly degenerated, and become very much like other men, in the indulgence of their passions and appetites. Though they were obliged by the plain doctrine of the gospel, to declare that the love of money is the root of all evil, and if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, yet their incessant and pressing applications for money, made to their enemies, gave them an opportunity to urge against those witnesses the plea of inconsistency. Money has always had, and ever will have, a direct tendency to vitiate the morals, and corrupt the pure stream of humble, ardent *love*, which should dwell richly in every christian's heart, regulating and influencing all the rivulets issuing therefrom.

Money—the love, and imprudent use of it, has, no doubt, been the efficient cause of the present corrupt state of the Roman Catholic Church; the shameful stratagems and unjustifiable means her popes and priests have adopted to procure *money*, aroused and exasperated an abused community; hence the deep and galling stab she received from Luther and his friends in the reformation.

We have been plainly and faithfully warned by the Lord Jesus Christ, against the love of money and its fatal influence upon the soul. What is Catholicism but corrupted christianity; and the efficient moving cause of this unholy work, has doubtless been the love of money.

We are men of like passions with others, and corrupt Protestantism will be as offensive to God, as corrupt Catholicism. The same cause will produce the same effect; and as money has a direct tendency to corrupt and harden our hearts, and blind our eyes, we should view it always with prudent caution, and guard against its earliest inroads into our hearts. There are none so rich and independent as those who have no wants. Hence, our beloved Saviour has counseled us to adopt a strict—a rigid course of self-

denial, which He has enforced by His own wise and honorable example.

God has mercifully condescended to make himself our debtor, and to allay all our fears, and strengthen our hearts, He says, "When thy father and thy mother cast thee off, I will take thee up." And assures us, "That thy bread shall be given, and thy water shall be sure." Again, our Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, has assured us, that "All things shall work together for good to them that love God." And has therefore positively forbidden all anxious care about the things of this world—what we shall eat, or drink, or wear: so that to indulge any of these fears, or any anxiety about these needful things, is not only wrong, but inexcusable in the child of God, because it not only leads us to distrust the goodness and mercy of God, but it impeaches His veracity also. We must guard against enthusiasm, however; we are not to suppose that God will feed and clothe us without using the means. The promises of God are always connected with reasonable conditions. Thus while we diligently and rationally use the means God has placed in our reach, and enjoined upon us, our minds should be calm

as the water's surface unruffled by a breath of air. Our duty is plain, both in spiritual and temporal things. Therefore we should *idle away no time*, but diligently improve every passing moment. No *idle* conversation, or *idle habits*, are compatible with the *purity* of the christian character, or pleasing in the sight of God. Our *time* and our *money*, are talents for our improvement, and while the christian must improve every fleeting precious moment of his time, he cannot waste unnecessarily one cent of his Divine Master's money. Therefore the child of God can purchase nothing designed to administer to the indulgence of the eye, or the taste, as all that is in the world, the lust of the eye, and the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world, and the world, and the lust thereof passeth away, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. Thus, when we administer to our fallen appetites, we become earthly and *sensual*. But when we act in all things, whether we eat, or drink, or wear, exclusively to please God, promote our health, and with a pure desire and design to administer, (as far as in us lieth,) to the good of our fellow beings, we act

spiritually and wisely; and if our hearts are *pure*, and the *love* of God is the impelling principle of all our actions, then, and only then, can we claim the great and precious promises of God; then, and only then, can we live and take no thought (no anxious care) for the morrow. Thus, by living under the guidance and influence of the Holy Spirit of God, we shall have no inducement to resort to unjustifiable measures to raise money. We should not then have to weep over the mortifying spectacle, of children of the Most High God, soliciting aid from the children of the devil! No need of *fairs* and tea parties, and thereby bowing to the world to get gain. Were christians to act their part faithfully, there would be no need of eloquent speeches to influence us to cast our money gifts into the Lord's treasury; nor would it be necessary to proclaim publicly—that A, will be one of ten, to give 50 or 100 dollars each. Those devices are seen, and will in time swell the stream of indignation, which may greatly contribute to the overthrow and death of the *witnesses*. “They tormented those that dwelt on the earth, by circumscribing their pleasures, and preaching eternal punishment, and also by an incessant application for their money.”

XIII.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES.

VERSE 11. "And after three days and a half, h spirit of life, from God, entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon those which saw them."

"Three days and a half," viz. *three years and a half*; which will probably be the time of their extreme suffering, their shame, their spiritual death; after which they stood upon their feet, prepared to march, or to fight the battles of the Lord. "And the spirit of life from God entered into them." Their spiritual life and energies were paralyzed. They had long indulged in the spirit and customs of an ungodly world; but now the *spirit of life from God*, enters into them. Now, no more conformity to the world, no more fear of man shall again tarnish their character, nor dishonor their God. They shall be raised gloriously and triumphantly; they now bear the perfect and exclusive image of God, their Heavenly Father.

Thus gloriously raised from death, and restored to life, the life of God now dwells richly in them, and they are clothed with the *spotless* garments of salvation, armed with the whole armor of righteousness on the right hand, and on the left, they will become a terror to their enemies.

“And great fear fell upon those which saw them.”

In the early days of Methodism, though her ministers were persecuted by the wicked, yet in the presence of these men of God, their enemies were awed into reverence. If sinners were engaged in deeds of infamy and vice, and one of these holy men made his appearance, the transgressors felt ashamed, and ceased from their deeds of sin and folly. But, alas, is it so now? Why this change? It is not because infidels or sinners have become more pious. Is not the change on our part? We have become more assimilated to the world, we have seen and feared Goliath, and have been unwilling to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ; we are unwilling to meet our foes in the plain armor of our God; the shepherd's sling and the smooth stone of simple, *powerful faith*, have been laid aside,

and we have arrayed ourselves in Saul's armor. We have qualified and prepared ourselves with learned arguments to meet and conquer the beast, the spirit of infidelity; but alas, they now fear us not; they know the nature and strength of our weapons, and they regard them not. Had David have met and fought with Goliath, arrayed in Saul's armor, he would have fallen an easy prey beneath the iron grasp of his mighty foe. But trusting in the strength of the omnipotent arm of God, without any visible defensive armor, and his offensive weapons quite contemptible and insignificant in appearance, he gained a complete and triumphant victory over his mighty, his infidel foe, and the name of the God of Hosts, in whom alone he trusted, was magnified in the sight of Israel, and the Philistean army.

We now fight the beast—the spirit of infidelity, with learned, and we think, powerful and conclusive arguments, so much so, that our foes are well nigh silenced; no respectable man is now willing to be called an infidel; yet their enmity and malice remains unchanged, and will burst out when a favorable time arrives, in furious and overwhelming vengeance on the heads

of their christian enemies, whom, in their inmost hearts they despise.

To show the superiority of simple, pure, powerful faith, the legitimate armor for the children of God, over Saul's armor, viz. learning and philosophy, we will insert an extract from the life of Thomas Smith, formerly a member of the Philadelphia Conference, a plain, successful Methodist preacher, where the following thrilling incident is related.

March 25. "Quarterly meeting was held at New Mills. The Rev. Thos. Ware presided. It began well, progressed well, and ended well. On Saturday night, Bro. S. Hutchinson preached, and mighty power from on high came among the people. I saw a young man sallying around in the crowd, and coming to the left of the pulpit, I made my way to him, and inquired into the state of his mind. He told me he was in great distress on account of his sins. While conversing with this young man, three gentlemen came up and insisted on his going away. I asked them if they were his guardians? They said, *no*. I desired them to be quiet until I was done talking with him. They remarked there was no necessity for talking

with that young man, on the subject of religion. "Perhaps, gentlemen," said I, "you do not believe in the christian religion." They said, "no, we do not." I said, "Gentlemen, will you suffer us to gather around you, and pray for you, for thirty minutes? after which, if there be no change in your minds, on the subject of the christian religion, I will agree to give it up myself." They replied, "Well, sir, we will take you at your own proposal, you shall pray for us for thirty minutes, and we will stand our ground until the thirty minutes shall have expired, and if any change be wrought in our minds, by any supernatural power, we will, as honest men, confess it; but if there be no change in our minds as to the truth of the christian religion, you shall, on your part renounce it before this congregation.

My answer was, "Gentlemen, I will most solemnly do so. Then, it is a bargain, amen." I then called the attention of the congregation to this awful contract. Many faces turned pale; others trembled with fear lest I should be a ruined man that night forever. I then requested the friends to give up the whole block of seats next to the pulpit. "*Infidelity and christianity*

are fairly at issue, and may the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob answer by fire." I then called on all the official members of the church, and all who could pray in faith, to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. In one minute there were scores around us. But before we kneeled I delivered them a charge; and that was, "brethren you are not to offer one prayer for the conversion of these gentlemen. If you do that prayer will be lost. But send your petitions to the throne of grace that God may convict them as He did Saul of Tarsus on his way to Damascus." This being understood, I cried, "*Let us pray.*" At that moment I reckon there were twenty watches drawn from the pocket to mark the time. If I ever saw a time of prayer it was that night. The whole congregation was one mouth, and one breath. The foundations of the house seemed to tremble. I held my watch and proclaimed the time. "Five minutes of the time are gone! Ten minutes of the time are gone! Fifteen minutes of the time are gone!" and down came a Saul of Tarsus to the floor. And was there not a shout? It was like the tumbling down of the walls of Jericho. "Twenty minutes of the time are gone!"

and down come the second. O the prayer ! and how the house did shake ! “Twenty-five minutes of the time are gone !” and the third gentleman took his seat. After the time allotted for prayer had expired, two gentlemen on the floor, and the third seated, I requested the congregation to be seated, and to be quiet ; for the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets. I then called on those three gentlemen to tell the congregation whether any change had taken place in their minds, and whether they then believed in the christian religion. So many of them as could stand, arose, and most solemnly declared that their minds had changed, and that they then believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. Christianity did at that time triumph over infidelity. To God be all the glory ! Amen. We consider T. Smith’s exercise of faith, on that occasion, not inferior to the victory gained by David over Goliath.

It is most certain that if those three infidels had have read carefully all the books that have ever been written on the subject of infidelity, and in proof of the christian religion (the Bible excepted) they would not have been as clearly convinced of the truth of divine revelation, and

the power of the gospel, as they were in those eventful thirty minutes. A living, powerful faith in Jesus Christ, accompanied with the power and influence of the Holy Ghost, is the ground work of all true and genuine religion. That which is not founded on this *Rock*, viz. Jesus Christ revealed to the soul of guilty men through the operation of the Holy Ghost, must go down, must and will fail in the trying hour.

XIV.

THE EXALTATION OF THE WITNESSES.

VERSE 12. "And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying, come up hither, and they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them."

The restoration of those witnesses to life, will be a glorious event. God's omnipotent voice awakes them into spiritual and powerful existence. They will then possess all the elements of christian life, viz. *power* and *purity*. Their sackcloth will fall off, and they shall be clothed with rich garments of salvation, and fully armed with the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. They will no longer confer with flesh and blood. They will henceforth make no compromise with an ungodly world. Their loins will be girt about with the omnipotent girdle of truth, unmixed with error or fiction. Their breastplate of righteousness will shine so bright that their enemies will be awed into silence in their presence, and fall before the majesty of their appearance, like Dagon before the ark of God. Their feet, then shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, they will, at the bidding of the great Captain of their salvation,

march triumphantly in the King's high way of holiness, and fight the battles of the Lord with universal success. Their shield of *faith* will securely protect them from every assault, and ward off all the fiery darts of all their enemies. Their heads will be forever and securely protected from every assault of their enemies, by the impervious helmet of salvation; and with the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, which will then, indeed, be quick and powerful, they will fight the battles of the Lord triumphantly, and with glorious and universal success. Their every breath will be prayer; nor will they ever again slumber on their post, but with sleepless vigilance watch every movement of the enemy, both from without and from within.

“And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud.” Heaven is a place of holiness—the presence of God, and whether it be on earth, or in the eternal world, it will be heaven where there is no sin, and where God's benign presence is manifested. “And their enemies beheld them.” The wicked, with eternal shame and confusion, will be permitted to behold their new and glorious character and privileges. The rich man saw Lazarus afar off in Abraham's bosom, while there was an impassable gulf between them.

XV.

COMMOTIONS CONNECTED WITH THIS EVENTFUL PERIOD.

VERSE 13. "And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men, seven thousand; and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven."

Earthquakes are, in the scriptures, indicative of commotions and convulsions, which will doubtless, in a peculiar manner, attend the momentous events prefigured and specified in the eventful history of those witnesses. The term seven thousand, may be used a certain for an uncertain number. Seven is a sacred—a scripture number, as the seven angels, the seven churches, the seven candlesticks, the week composed of seven days, or it may indicate one-seventh part of the inhabitants of the earth. The true meaning of those obscure terms, will be made known in due time—in God's own time. Secret things belong to God, and those that are revealed, to us and our children.

“The remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.” The omnipotent hand of God will not only be exerted in an extraordinary manner, but men, all mankind, saints and sinners, believers and infidels, will perceive evidently the Hand Divine in those wonderful scenes, and will be constrained to give the glory to God, when they see His *wisdom*, and His *power*, and His *mercy*, fully displayed in the presence of an astonished universe. Then will it be seen, that not only does the kingdom belong to Christ, but that the power is His, and His shall be the glory also. Heaven and earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

XVI.

THE JOY EXPRESSED IN HEAVEN AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN.

VERSE 15. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever."

At the resurrection of the witnesses—the purified church shining forth in the glorious image of her Redeemer the Holy One of Israel, their garments washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, will the glorious day of the millennium commence, when all shall be of one heart and of one mind. Then will the lion and the lamb lie down together, and nothing shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain. Heaven and earth will then rejoice together, and the angelic host shall raise their voice of wonder and praise, proclaiming aloud, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and

ever. Then shall the mystery of redemption be fully developed to the wondering and adoring multitude of saints and angels. Then, and not until then, will it be fully understood why God bore so long with sinful rebels—why the Lord Jesus did not assume His great power and bring in universal righteousness sooner. Then will the wisdom, the *mercy* and *love* and *power* of the Saviour of our lost world, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, be the theme and wonder of adoring and worshiping multitudes through an unending eternity.

Connected with the spiritual death of the two witnesses, it is presumable the fire of God's anger will literally consume all the monuments of pride and vanity erected by the folly of man, and this globe will be purified by fire, and the curse of God be forever removed, and the earth restored to her primitive, her paradisaical beauty and glory. Then will the important petition expressed in our Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven," be fully realized in the universal salvation of God's people. There will then exist in the human heart, no impure or unholy de-

sires, or motives, or purposes; all shall be of one heart, and of one mind—all shall be essentially *one*, and God our Redeemer shall be all in all.

Surely this glorious consummation—this final scene of redemption, should be the constant theme, and the ardent desire of every heart. Our incessant and importunate prayer should be, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.” It is even now the distinguished privilege of every child of God, to have Christ’s kingdom set up in his heart—to have no will of his own, but to do the will of God daily and hourly; such, and such only, can be accounted worthy of a place in Christ’s glorious millennial kingdom, for nothing impure or unholy can be admitted there; nor can death change our nature, or wash out one stain—no, nothing but the blood of Jesus can wash the dismal stains of sin away, and qualify our souls for an eternal residence with the saints of light.

The Psalmist in speaking by Divine inspiration of the period when Christ shall display His power in the presence of an astonished world, says, “Thy people,” (the Jews,) “shall be willing in the day of thy *power*, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning” (the millen-

nial morn) "thou has the dew of thy youth." Jew and Gentile shall then be united, and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd. Now no more divisions among men, nor discordant sound heard in heaven or on earth, Amen. Come Lord Jesus, and come quickly. The kingdom is thine—the power is thine, and thine, O blessed Saviour, shall be the glory, forever and ever.

XVII.

ADDITIONAL PROOF OF THE CORRECTNESS OF THOSE VIEWS.

IN our fallen sin-disordered state, we generally (as did the Jews) love to hear smooth things prophesied. The cup of flattery, though we apprehend that it contains deadly poison, is more palatable and pleasing to our taste than plain wholesome truths that wounds our consciences, and condemns us before the world. It is presumable that the views and sentiments exhibited in the preceding remarks, however reasonable, and well sustained by scripture they may be, will not be favorably received by the church in the present day. Ministers will doubtless prefer their favorite theories. Most of them believe that the instrumentalities now in operation will in due time effect the great object and design of the gospel, and the purpose for which Christ came into the world, viz. to destroy the works of the devil, and establish a state of universal *peace, purity* and righteousness on earth.

We will, therefore, assign some further reasons, sustained by clear scripture proof, in regard to the identity to the apocalyptic witnesses, their overthrow, their death, and their resurrection and ultimate triumphant victory.

The present state of the church, and her past history renders the idea of her ever reaching the elevated position assigned to her in God's word by the process now in operation, visionary in the extreme, if not *impracticable*.

The church in her present condition dishonors the Lord Jesus Christ, as her great Head and Founder. In the work of creation, Christ's signature is *order, harmony, and perfection*. There exists no flaw in creation's frame, except where sin has marred her form. No blot found upon creation's page. All created nature, all things in heaven and upon earth, harmonize, and unite in ascribing *wisdom, and power, perfection and mercy* to their great Creator; they declare aloud in reason's ear, "the hand that formed us is *divine*."

Not so the church, *discord* is legibly written on almost every feature of her existence. Nor has this dark trait, this suspicious mark, received any improvement from age and experience.

During the last half century division and discord has been on the advance. In the last twenty or thirty years, almost all the prominent religious sects have been sundered, divided and subdivided. Every reflecting and intelligent mind must acknowledge that family discord is not only painful in its nature, but dishonorable and ruinous in its results. This blemish is seen by every eye, by all our reflecting enemies; and they know it is not Christ's signature. Jews and infidels prefer this charge against us; and we, to ward off their darts, and hide our torn garments, apologise for our nakedness, and say, "that in all essential principles we agree, we are united; it is only in small items, in non-essentials we disagree. *Love* is not a non-essential principle, it is this Divine element, that constitutes the quintessence of christianity. It was the existence of this heavenly principle, that caused the bitter enemies of Christ's early followers, to cry out, "see how these christians *love*!" *Love* is the golden chain which binds all the inhabitants of heaven together; not one jar, or discordant note is heard in all the heavenly world—the family there are all one, indissolubly ONE, and God is all in all. No jarring

note or sound is heard among the multitude who sing the *new song*, one *sound*, one *senti-ment*, one *feeling*, one *motive*, one *intent*; ten thousand thousand are their tongues, but all their joys are *one*. Jesus Christ, the great architect and builder of His church, has taught us to pray, "*thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.*" Therefore, as there is no flaw nor discordant feeling in heaven, neither should there be on earth. The necessity and importance of *perfect harmony* or unanimity among the saints on earth, the members of God's family, the church, will appear more clearly from the relation we bear to God. The Bible says, *thy Maker is thy Husband*, the church in the New Testament is called the "Bride, the Lamb's wife." In this endearing relation there can be no flaw, no suspicion—the *love must be perfect*. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and the twain shall be one flesh." Mark x, 7, 8. Hence reason and revelation, and the divine principles of righteousness harmonize in their sentiments, the perfect union of the church on earth.

There exists, it is true, an opinion generally among the children of God, that we cannot per-

fectly harmonize in all things, and this may be true as it regards our judgment, while we see in part; but the *heart*, the *affections* of the *heart*—*love*, will admit of no discord; all, all in that heavenly and divine element must perfectly harmonize; no flaw, no suspicion, no division. *Love*, like its great original, is a unit. God is love. This glorious principle is opposed to all evil; like honesty and dishonesty, like virtue and vice, they are antagonistic principles. No man can be honest and dishonest at the same time. No compromise in those high and essential elements of christianity are admissible. We must be on the Lord's side, or we must take part with His enemies.

The most common observer must, if divested of prejudice, perceive that the Bride is not prepared to meet the Bridegroom. Was the Lord Jesus to call the church to meet him this hour, how few now on earth would meet Him with as much joy and delight as an affectionate wife would meet her husband who had been absent only a few months! Should not this plain rational view of the subject alarm us all, for we may be called to meet the Lord Jesus this night, the next hour.

No sober minded rational christian, can sup-

pose that Christ possesses less sensibility than poor fallen man; nor can we rationally believe that He views with indifference a slight alienation of our affections from him. No, He represents Himself as being a jealous God, and with His piercing eye, discerns the inmost thoughts and intents of our heart. We sometimes console ourselves, and strive to quiet our consciences by shrouding our hearts with the mantle of our numerous infirmities and imperfections, in contrast with the *power, wisdom, and purity* of God; and thus endeavor to persuade ourselves, that the mercy of our blessed Saviour, will influence Him to look over errors and frailties,—that He will not expect to find perfection in such frail, imperfect creatures as we are. This is doubtless a correct sentiment in regard to our real infirmities, such as our knowledge, perception, judgment, memory, &c. But the affections of the heart can, and must be perfect. The redemption price, paid for that precious jewel, has been too great to make any compromise or allowance in the premises. The blood of Jesus is sufficient to wash out *every* stain, and His grace can support us every moment, can keep the wedding garment undefiled, without “*spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.*”

It is therefore in view of the price paid for our soul, and the character of the Author of our redemption, and the high and holy connection which must exist between the living God, and his redeemed subjects, that Christ says unequivocally, "*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*" Matt. v, 48. The beloved disciple also enforces the same sentiment, when he says, "*And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as He is pure.*" 1 John iii, 3. A merciful and good God does not require us to be *perfect in knowledge*, nor in our judgment, nor in the exercise of our *perceptive faculties*, nor our *memory*; these infirmities will doubtless remain with us until this mortal shall put on immortality; as even those innocent infirmities cannot be admitted into heaven, they will be left in the grave, when we are raised in Christ's glorious image; then shall we know even as we also are known, then will there be no disparity between the bridegroom and the bride. Yet does the Lord Jesus reasonably and unequivocally require us to be perfect, even in this world, in *love*, our *affections must be pure*. If the virtuous wife can, and does love her husband

perfectly, we can, and *must love God perfectly*. The honorable husband would be unwilling to share his wife's affections with the best man on earth, nor would it afford his wounded heart the slightest relief, to hear his wife assure him, that she loved him *better* than his rival. Therefore, "if any man love the world," (*more or less*), "the love of the Father is not in him."

On this important subject the strong language of scripture should cause us to fear and tremble before the righteous Judge of all the earth. The inspired writer says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? *Whosoever therefore will be the friend of the world, is the enemy of God.*" James iv, 4.

Alas! how many of our leaders in Israel, of our great men in the Church, will stand condemned when the above declaration is read out in the judgment day!

Very few of our great and learned men are willing to be slighted, or persecuted; they would much rather be honored and applauded by the rich and influential part of community. Many of us forget Christ's omnipotent, but plain words, and seem to attach no importance to them, when

He says, "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold your reward is great in heaven. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you." Luke vi, 22, 23, 26.

O, where shall we find the spirit, evidently required of us as christians, in those passages of God's word? Again, Christ asks a plain, a most important question, "How can ye believe, which receive honor, one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?"

As it regards the spirit and import of this plain and comprehensive inquiry, it must be conceded that our Quaker friends are in advance of nearly every other branch of Christ's church. O that they were as faithful in the observance of *all* Christ's words and commands, and precepts. We shall all find in the great day of eternity, that God's word is quick and powerful, and every jot and tittle thereof will stand as immutably sure as God himself, and all of us who slight or neglect the commands and precepts of Jesus Christ, found in the New Tes-

tament, must be found guilty before God, and shut out of heaven.

After candidly and impartially considering the character and condition of the church as it now exists, and contrasting it with what it should be, as described in God's word, in the New Testament, where we are required to be *pure in heart*, and *holy* as God is *holy*, to do *God's will on earth as it is done in heaven*, to love our neighbors (viz. all mankind) as ourselves; we may at least perceive the probability that the judgments of God must affect what His mercy has failed to accomplish. It is reasonable to suppose that the rubbish will have to be burned up, before that holy state of gospel *purity* shall exist among men generally, which the word of the Lord promises, and God's character demands of his church.

God has power to cast down and to build up, to kill and make alive. The kingdom is Christ's, and the power is His, and His shall be the glory. It is therefore, both reasonable and presumable, from scripture authority, to suppose that those witnesses clothed in sackcloth will be cast down, will be slain, spiritually slain; shall be despoiled of all their present power and glo-

ry, and at the proper time, raised again in purity, and power and splendor, clothed no longer in sackcloth, but adorned with the white robes of righteousness, unsoiled by the touch of a corrupt world, and unspotted by one particle of prejudice, or pride, or love of the world; without one discordant element in the heart, or in the entire family. Thus raised again spiritually and gloriously into life, they will bear their Saviour's image, and dwell together in harmony and love. They shall then, indeed, walk with Christ, for they are worthy.

XVIII.

FURTHER EVIDENCE OF CORRECTNESS OF THE FOREGOING THEORY.

As further evidence of the truth of the foregoing views, of the death of those witnesses, we will advert to the following impressive and important declarations of our blessed Saviour: "But as the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not, until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." Matt. xxiv, 37, 38, 39.

"Likewise, also, as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all; even thus shall it be, when the Son of Man is revealed." Luke xvii, 28, 29, 30.

Those declarations are awfully expressive of some dreadful event yet in the future, and most

refer to Christ's second coming, when the witnesses shall be slain. It is true, that wise and learned commentators, have applied those scenes described by Christ, to the destruction of Jerusalem; but this cannot be correct. Dreadful as was that event, it will not justify the strong and comprehensive language used by our Saviour. When the antideluvians were destroyed there was but one family saved; and when Sodom was consumed, only part of one family escaped the awful deluge of fire.

Neither can those solemn declarations refer to the scenes that shall take place at the final consummation of all things, the general judgment day, for the plain reason, that there are consoling and unequivocal promises given to us in God's word, that a period shall arrive in the history of our world, when righteousness shall universally obtain; of that happy day it is said, "All shall know the Lord, from the least unto the greatest." Here, also, commentators have endeavored to allay the fears and damp the hopes of the honest inquirer after truth, they say that at the specified period, all shall understand the plan of salvation, or, righteous knowledge will then be universal, or, that the righteous

will then govern the world, as the wicked now bear rule.

The prophet, however, is more specific, and says, "And they shall teach no more, every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for all shall know the Lord, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more." Jer. xxxi, 34. And a still more expressive description is given by the evangelical prophet, of that happy day, he says, "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw with the bullock, and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall no more hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; saith the Lord." Isaiah lxxv, 25. After that glorious period, when all shall be righteous, even the most ferocious animals shall be tamed, and dwell together in perfect harmony. It is not therefore presumable, if possible, that after the universal spread of righteousness over the earth, that all should become again corrupt and be destroyed by the breath of God's anger. If that awful event, specified by our Saviour, cannot refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, nor to the final judgment day,

it must take place at Christ's second coming, to establish His kingdom on earth, in glorious triumph; when the witnesses clothed in sackcloth shall be slain, and after three years and a half, rise again in *peace* and *purity*. The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever and ever." Daniel vii, 18. Thus it is said of the risen witnesses, Rev. xi, 15, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever."

In adverting to that awfully solemn day, our Saviour says, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth." Clearly intimating, that faith in its legitimate and perfect form, will not then be found on earth. This, however, cannot be said of the period when Jerusalem was destroyed, there were still some of the apostles living, and others who had not defiled their garments, even in that evil day. And surely it cannot refer to any period of time subsequent to the universal diffusion of righteousness and peace, which must be realized on earth, before time shall end. But that fearful declaration is, in one important sense, strictly true of our world at this time,

notwithstanding the prevailing opinion to the contrary. Most certainly we cannot find the kind of faith once delivered to the saints; the faith that characterized the Jewish witnesses nearly all through the days of their prosperity; that faith which honors God, and Christ says shall remove mountains, that faith which has been made by Christ himself, the test proof of our christian character as his ministering servants. The genuine commission given to every minister of the gospel, runs thus, "And he said unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach my gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands upon the sick and they shall recover." Mark xvi, 15, 16. The minister who does not act under this commission, had better return home again to his farm, or shop, or desk. The authorities of the church may and should endorse this commission, to prevent imposition and fraud, but the legiti-

mate authority must come, even to the latest generation of men, from the great head of the church ; from the Lord Jesus Christ. How can we rationally account for the fact, that we receive our commission to preach the gospel from Christ, but refuse his certificate ; we claim the authority, but deny the power. For it must be conceded that the kind of faith specified in the original, the genuine commission, is not only not found *now* on earth, but it is positively rejected. The authorities of the church (of any respectable branch of the church) would silence or disown the minister who would advocate the doctrine of miracle working faith ; or assert that Christ's declaration describing the true evidence of our commission, is binding on us *now*. Yet the very tenor of the commission proves that it was to be in force to the end of time, for He adds, "*Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*" The men who received their authority to preach from the lips of their Divine master, could not continue to the end of the world ; consequently Christ included in the commission, and the test given of its genuineness, all His ministers to the close of time, of our probationary state. If therefore this plain, legiti-

mate kind of faith is indispensable in the Church is plainly and publicly repudiated, surely it cannot be found upon earth, even in this day of extraordinary light and privilege.

If, however, we view *faith* in its most common aspect, its lowest grade, in its most feeble form, viz. a firm belief in the attributes of God as an omnipresent Being; this sentiment or act of *faith* is indelibly engraven on the mind and consciences of every honest infidel, hence in many instances when professed infidels have been suddenly exposed to imminent danger, they have either voluntarily or otherwise, called on the name of God for help, for deliverance from the jaws of death, which would be an act of downright folly, if they did not *believe* that God was present, and heard their prayer.

In this divine attribute, in the omnipresence of God, we all profess to *believe*—so at least we think and speak; but is it really true? Do we fully and consistently believe this simple, plain, but important truth? All of us who say or do any thing we would not say or do if the Lord Jesus was personally present, do not consistently and fully believe this undeniable truth; for He (Jesus Christ) is really (spiritually) pre-

sent, and hears *every word we speak*. Alas—alas, how few there are, even among professing christians, that do and say nothing, which they would not do and say if the Lord Jesus was personally present! Perhaps a Lot or a Noah could now be found on earth.

Again, we all profess to believe God's word as it is revealed in the Bible; but is it really so? Do we firmly and consistently believe all God's written word? If I say to my friend, "I believe nearly all your statements, one declaration however I cannot receive," I dishonor my friend and make him a liar. If, therefore, we do not consistently, and universally believe all God's written word, we dishonor the Lord, and fall under that condemnatory sentence, "he that believeth not shall be damned." Surely we should examine this all important subject honestly in the sight of God. Do we fully believe that solemn declaration, "but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter iii, 10.

Do not many of us read that soul-thrilling declaration with great indifference! We can retire to bed unprepared to meet that solemn scene, to meet the Righteous Judge of all the earth, and yet feel little or no concern about the awful event.

Was our neighbor to inform us that he overheard a number of incendiaries arrange a plan to burn down our house one night next week, would we, after hearing that declaration, retire to bed carelessly, without making a suitable preparation to meet that dreadful event? Not so; we would place a guard around our house, and take every precaution in our power to prevent the destruction of our property, and the life of our family; and we would act thus rationally, because we *believed* our neighbor's word. But when God speaks and declares that He will come as a thief in the night, *and may come this night*, to burn up the world, and yet we repair to bed without making a good and sufficient preparation to meet the awfully important case, and feel little or no concern about the matter! Is it not, therefore, most certain that in all such cases (and they are innumerable in the church) that we do not believe God's word? We be-

lieve and honor man when he speaks, but *disbelieve* and dishonor God when He speaks. "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

The above declaration of Jesus could not refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, for the plain reason that some of His apostles were then living who had doubtless retained that invaluable treasure, the faith once committed to them. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that such a gloomy state of things will exist at the final close of probationary time, when the dead, small and great, shall be summoned to appear at the judgment seat of Christ, after the glorious period of universal righteousness; hence we conclude that the destitution of faith spoken of, and the general prevalence of infidelity plainly intimated in the text must refer to the period of Christ's second coming to establish His kingdom in truth and righteousness on earth, to the period when the witness shall be slain, shall be killed, and raised again, possessed of the life of God, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the faith that works powerfully by love, and realizes fully all the promises of the gospel.

The following prediction clearly points to the

death, and also to the *resurrection* of the witnesses, to the restoration of the Jews, and the introduction of the millennial reign. "Therefore wait ye upon me saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey, for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour out my indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent." Zephaniah iii, 8, 9.

In the above passage the Lord, by his prophet, calls on His people, the Jews, to wait patiently under their long and sore trials and sufferings, in their sackcloth state, until the cup of the Gentiles shall be full—until the period when all the prophecies shall be fulfilled, when the fire of His righteous anger shall be kindled against the gentile world, including the corrupt church, then at, or about, that time shall the power and glory of the God of Israel be displayed in the resurrection of His people, of His church, both Jew and Gentile. Then will the mighty angel come down from heaven having a chain in his

hand, and Satan the adversary and deceiver of the nations shall be bound. The demon of discord will be permitted no more to sow his unhallowed seed among the redeemed of the Lord. Then shall there be indeed one fold and one shepherd, and nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain. In the renewed and purified earth, restored to its paradisaical purity and glory. Happy, glorious day; should not our unceasing and anxious prayer be, "come Lord Jesus, and come quickly, come and claim thine own, and sway thy sceptre and reign on earth as thou dost in heaven, and dwell in the midst of thy saints."

XIX.

AN OBJECTION ANSWERED.

“BUT will not this view of the subject, have a tendency to discourage the ministers of the gospel, especially in their missionary operations?” By no means. Their duty is to occupy until the Master comes—and, as it was in Sodom and the antideluvian world, there will be a Noah, a Lot, a few who will be found righteous before God, who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth—who have not received the mark of the beast either in their forehead or their hand, who have not bowed the knee to Baal, nor bowed the head to Haman. Who have spurned the world from their embrace, and have not conformed internally or externally to the spirit or customs and maxims of an ungodly world, neither in their houses, their furniture, their apparel, nor in any other way. Their eye has been single, and their constant motive has been to please God, and bear the cross of Jesus Christ. They can consistently,

and understandingly, and honestly, and cheerfully look the poor suffering widow and her naked orphans, and say, without fear of contradiction or shame, "*we loved you as we loved our own souls.*" We have considered your spiritual and temporal welfare, as much as our own. These, however numerous or few their number may be, shall walk with Christ in white for they are worthy.

And could the servants of God, the ambassadors of Christ be instrumental in saving one such soul, it would be infinitely more important than to gain all the wealth of the earth, and all the honors of the world, so frequently sought after at the risk and sacrifice of their souls. All the titles of distinction, such as Rev., D. D., Professor A., &c., &c., will be blown away and burned up as the chaff of the summer's thrashing floor. While one poor, humble, blood-bought, and blood-washed soul, though found at the rich man's gate begging for crumbs, saved and brought home as a sheaf for our Master's granary in heaven, to live and reign with Lazarus, and that innumerable company who have gone up through great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood

of the Lamb, will out weigh all our flimsy honor, and popularity, and the glory of man, a million of times over. Then let us go forth bearing precious seed, and in due time we shall return, bringing our sheaves with us.

Let us, therefore, occupy until the Master comes, but let us do so faithfully and diligently. Let us make no compromise with an ungodly world. Let us not confer with flesh and blood. Let us measure ourselves by the only true standard, by the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us be careful to have His Spirit, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, and faithfully follow His glorious example—imitate constantly and faithfully Christ's self-denying and self-sacrificing life—knowing that those, and those only, who suffer with Him shall reign with Him. If we be dead with Christ (to the riches, honors, and pleasures of the world) we shall also live with Him, shall sit down with Him on His throne, as He has overcome and has sit down with His Father on His throne. *Discouraged?* No, never, until I am debarred from the cross of Christ; never, until Christ frowns and the world smiles on me, then, and not until then shall my soul sink in unholy doubts and fears.

While we have great and precious promises to cheer and comfort us by the way, we have also many solemn and admonitory lessons to be cautious, to be always on our guard, and watching unto prayer.

XX.

ADDITIONAL WARNINGS AND ADMONITIONS IN REGARD TO COMING EVENTS.

OUR Divine Master has given us many faithful and solemn warnings, among others the following, which should make a deep impression on our hearts. After having described some of the signs and wonders that should precede and accompany His second coming, and the reverses and afflictions that should befall the Jews. He adds, "and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (Until the measure of their iniquity is full.) "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth, distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with

power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And He spake to them a parable, Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of yourselves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when you see these things come to pass, know that the *kingdom of God* is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." [That generation, that people has not yet passed away, nor will they until these great events shall be fulfilled. This itself is an admonitory miracle.]

"Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. *For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.* Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." Luke xxi, 24 to 36.

To the prudent, reflecting mind, those disclo-

tures and admonitions, clothed with the authority they are, should make a deep and solemn impression on our hearts, knowing that the period specified is just at hand. But learned and wise men have lulled their readers into a state of indifference, if not of carnal and ruinous security. They have asserted, that all these awful events expressed by our Saviour, had direct reference to the destruction of Jerusalem! How strange that wise men could themselves believe that those things exclusively pointed to the destruction of Jerusalem, when it is expressly said, that their favorite city shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the time adverted to. These things cannot refer exclusively to the overthrow of Jerusalem, neither can they point to any period after the entire conversion of the world. Those days, nor any other event, can overtake them as a snare, for they are all prepared for any and every event which the wisdom of God may direct or permit to visit our lower world. Therefore the time specified must be the period when Christ shall come to establish His kingdom universally on the earth.

XXI.

ANOTHER OBJECTION MET.

WE are generally very unwilling to believe any thing, however plausible, which we do not wish to believe. We cannot think that the present constituted state of things will be overturned. What! our churches, our missionary, and Bible, and tract, and Sabbath school, with many other excellent gospel institutions, those cast off and overthrown! Impossible! So thought the Jews of their beloved temple, the most splendid and costly edifice the world has ever seen, and their chosen and favored city, Jerusalem, surely God will not forsake us. He will not cast off His people! And his own word throws around us a cord of perfect security; it cannot be! Yet it was so, and their overthrow the most abject and complete—and though they are and have long been clothed in "*sackcloth*," have drank the cup of sorrow and degradation to its dregs. They have been for more than eighteen centuries, politically and morally

dead, without a home, a country, a temple, an altar to offer their sacrifices on—buried in oblivion and shame, a proverb and a by-word, and a hissing among all nations, yet God, the God of Abraham, a covenant keeping God, has his merciful eye upon them, and the strong, wise arm of His divine and overruling providence is thrown around them, and when they shall have finished their testimony, when all the prophecies are fulfilled, they will be raised into life, and beauty, and power; those dry bones shall live again, and become an exceeding great army, for strong is the Lord God of their fathers, and He will visit them in due time.

Let us now examine a few of the reasons the Jews had to believe that their God would not forsake or cast them off, and we shall find them more numerous and powerful, than we have to hope or believe, that we, as God's people, His church will not be cast off and spiritually slain, cast down, forsaken.

“They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people, from henceforth even forever.” Psalms cxxv, 1,

2. "Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted His people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her suckling child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." Isaiah xlix, 13, 14, 15, 16.

"Thus saith the Lord which giveth the sun for light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is his name; if those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever. Thus saith the Lord; if heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all they have done saith the Lord." Jeremiah xxxi, 35, 36, 37. "But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel; for be-

hold I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return and be in rest and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord; for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure, yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished." Jeremiah xlv, 27, 28.

It is not surprising that the Israelites after their return from their Babylonian captivity should have been so confident that God would never again leave nor forsake them, having received such strong assurances of that fact (at least in man's estimation) in the above promises and predictions; yet they have been scattered over the face of the whole earth, a proverb and a by-word among all nations. God's word is as immutable as His own existence, and the declaration contained in the above promises to the Jews, viz. that He will make a full end of all nations, should cause us to pause, and fear, and not be too confident that we shall not be cast off.

Seeing that there is such a strong propensity

to look only on the bright side of the picture in regard to ourselves, and thereby to deceive ourselves, we will give one more quotation from the evangelical prophet, to show what powerful reasons the Jews had to believe firmly that their God would never forsake them, at least after their first captivity, especially as they could have no just idea of their awful fall and rejection after the crucifixion of their Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Fearful and awful as was their conduct in crucifying the Son of God, we can show by the most just, and plain scripture arguments that our conduct under the shining rays of the gospel, has been worse, and more cruel than theirs.

“Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel: The God of the whole earth shall He be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a

small moment have I forsaken thee ; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment ; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me : For as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth ; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed ; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Isaiah liv, 4 to 10.

With the solemn and impressive warning administered by the conduct and fate of that peculiar people, we should fear and tremble in the presence of the mighty God of Jacob, and work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

We should, therefore, give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip, for if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ? The angel com-

manded Lot's wife to escape to the mountain, and not look back, she transgressed, she looked back, and was promptly turned to a pillar of salt, to continue as a solemn warning to all generations not to follow her guilty conduct. And the Lord Jesus admonishes us to *remember Lot's wife*. Her crime in the estimation of man would appear to be very insignificant; yet it was a violation of law, of God's word, though spoken by angels. She had also a powerful incentive to commit the crime—her daughter was in the devoted place about to be destroyed—yet when God speaks, man or woman must not equivocate, or plead inducements, or infirmities as a palliation of their offence. At the judgment bar of God we shall meet Lot's wife, and then remember Christ's injunction.

Can we possibly imagine that a just and holy God would condemn that woman for a slight offence, and a powerful inducement to impel her to its commission, and acquit and receive us into heaven though we have disobeyed Christ's plain commands and precepts? Such a supposition is neither just nor reasonable. There are some of our Saviour's precepts and commands that none but the pure in heart can obey fully. None but

the pure in heart can love God with all their heart, strength and mind, and their neighbor as themselves ; but all can comply with the following duty, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors ; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee ; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Luke xiv, 12, 13, 14.

Yet are there many, very many members of the church who are profoundly indifferent about the observance of Christ's words in the above text, and many other passages written in the New Testament. And yet all are confident that they will be received into heaven, notwithstanding they trample the laws and precepts of our Divine Redeemer beneath their feet, pay no regard to them whatever, though the Lord Jesus has said, heaven and earth shall pass away but not one jot nor tittle of my word shall fall to the ground. The Righteous Judge, has also cautioned us by saying, Many will come in that

day, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, we have done many wonderful things in thy name, and have cast out devils, sinners have been converted under our preaching, let us come in. Then will I profess unto them I never knew you, depart ye workers of iniquity into everlasting fire. I could not know you as my faithful followers and servants, ye were not such, ye have, therefore, deceived your own souls. And the Revelator says, "By thy sorceries were all nations deceived." Yet we think it is impossible that God can, or will forsake and overthrow His discordant and disobedient church. It is most true He will not cast off His faithful followers, those who have the Spirit of Christ, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, and with His expiring breath prayed for His murderers, who obey all His commands and precepts fully. Those will be saved as was Noah and Lot. Those have nothing to fear from men or devils.

XXII.

FURTHER REASONS GIVEN FOR THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES.

IF, however, the witnesses are not to be slain at the coming of Christ, what does he mean by the following declarations?

“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken by a mighty wind. And the heavens departed as a scroll when it rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great

day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. vi, 12—17.

Those awful scenes cannot refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, for the plain reason that they were written after that period; neither can they be applied to a period of universal holiness, which God himself has declared, shall mark our world's history; therefore they must have direct reference to Christ's second coming, to destroy His enemies, and establish his kingdom on earth, in universal peace and righteousness. That glorious day must, and will come, nor can it be introduced in any other way than that specified in so many parts of the Old and New Testaments; Noah's flood and Sodom's fate, have been by the Lord Jesus, held up as strikingly typical of that great day, called "the great day of his wrath."

There is another awful description given of that day, which cannot, for reasons already assigned, be ascribed to the destruction of Jerusalem, nor can it possibly take place after the introduction of the millennium, when righteousness shall fill and cover the whole earth. So that those dreadful scenes can take place, only, when Christ shall come again to establish His

kingdom on earth. "And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and he cried with a loud voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horses bridles, by the space of a thousand and six-hundred furlongs." Rev. xiv, 17—20.

This dreadful description of an event in which we are all deeply concerned, should cause our ears to tingle and our hearts to quail. In most cases, however, it is to be feared that we read of those solemn and awful scenes with indifference, as though we were not at all interested in them; or if our attention is called to them, we conclude they refer exclusively to the Roman Catholic Church, or that they will, if ever, take place at some far—far distant period of our world's history, and thus quiet our conscience,

and rest contented, and thus that day will come upon as a thief in the night. The apostle to the gentiles, says, when they shall say peace and safety, then, sudden destruction will come upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. It is the unholy church, the christian witness that is concerned in these things ; and that no one need be deceived, we have a clear description of those who shall fall in this awful conflict, drawn by the unerring hand of Divine inspiration, whether they be Catholics or Protestants, or by whatever name they may be designated. Let us read, and apply the mark to our own hearts, honestly, "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, if any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation ; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb ; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up, forever and ever ; and they have no rest, day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever re-

ceiveth the mark of his name." Rev. xiv, 9, 10, 11.

The beast is the devil, and sin is his mark ; nor can we be deceived in this conclusion ; hence, it is morally certain that wherever sin or its mark is found, either on the forehead, viz. where we wilfully and openly transgress God's laws and precepts, or whether the mark be found by the scrutinizing eye of Jehovah, to exist only in the hand, viz. covered up from others and from ourselves in part ; when we are unwilling to investigate the true bearing and character of every act, especially of every motive, perhaps a trait of pride, or love of the world, its pleasures, or its applause, &c., the symptom is ominous. Surely we should deal honestly with our own souls in the presence of a heart-searching and a reign-trying God, and in view of those awful and thrilling scenes, which He has declared shall be visited on our devoted, our evil world.

The past and present condition of the minor witness—the Jews, their unparalleled sufferings and degraded state, which has been borne by them so long, should cause us to fear and tremble before the God of Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob. What was their sin ? What has called

down those heavy and almost unmitigated judgments on their heads?

They rejected the Messiah, and crucified the Eternal Son of God; but Christ Himself says they done it ignorantly, "*They know not what they do.*" Let us now honestly compare and contrast their conduct, their sins with ours. Do we not crucify our Saviour afresh (spiritually) and put him to open shame, all through our christian land, and a large and learned, and respectable portion of the orthodox church, declare openly we cannot do otherwise; neither the Jews, nor the power of the Roman empire could have crucified the Son of God, in one important sense, the Lord Jesus says, no man taketh my life, I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. It was sin that caused the Saviour's death, and every wilful sin we commit, we cry in reality, crucify him, crucify him! This is a solemn, an awful consideration, especially when many of our teachers in Israel declare that we cannot live without sin. With this momentous view of the subject staring us in the face, and in full view of the overthrow and sufferings of the Jews, shall we fold our arms in unhallowed

security, and cry, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we ! Shall we point to our societies, Missionary, and Bible, and Sabbath School and Tract, &c., and vainly suppose that God cannot dispense with those instrumentalities, he cannot, he will not cast us of, though discord darkens almost every future and form of the church. Notwithstanding the mark of the beast is perceptible in our hand generally, and frequently in our forehead, while we crucify the Son of God afresh, daily, and put him to open shame ! The apostle to the Gentiles, in addressing the church, (and such only as will be owned of Christ in the day of eternity as *His Church*,) says, “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Although this is the real character of christians—*they are dead*. Alas, how few in any branch of the church can claim this distinguishing and honorable trait of character. To realize this state, we must be dead to the world, say wealth, just as willing to be poor as to be rich, as willing to suffer as to enjoy, otherwise we cannot be *dead*, in the proper scripture gospel sense of the term. Dead to the opinion of the world, as willing to be despised and hissed at as to be applauded. This truly

elevated state is fully recognized by our Saviour's words, when he says, "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy; for behold your reward is great in heaven." Luke vi, 22, 23. How many can we now find in any branch of the church, who really bear this mark? Alas, how few! Where shall we find them?

We generally put a patch upon our torn garments by saying, if they were to treat us in this manner for *Christ's sake*. If we are truly Christ's servants, God's children, they must do it for Christ's sake, unless we serve two masters, which no man can do without shame and condemnation. O how few of us honor our Divine Master who has done so much for us, by doing and saying, all we do and say to please the Lord Jesus! Yet if we are not governed by this reasonable rule, we are vainly striving to serve two masters. These remarks are made to show our friends that the church is not what she should be, not what she must be. Hence, our present position is not permanent, is not

safe. Nothing but that which is *pure* can stand the fire of God's anger. And if the fountain is *pure*, the streams issuing therefrom will of necessity be pure also; Christ says, a good tree cannot bear corrupt fruit, nor can a corrupt tree bear good fruit; that the tree is known by its fruit. "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place, sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? Either a vine, figs? So can no fountain yield both salt water and fresh." James iii, 11, 12. Hence it is not only a gospel truth, but a philosophical principle, established by the divine law which regulates all things on earth and in heaven. Therefore if the heart is *pure*, (and without holiness no man shall see the Lord,) our *thoughts* and *words* and *actions* will be *pure*; our *desires* and *motives* must be *pure* also. If our *motives* are *impure*, it argues a desperately depraved heart. Whether, therefore, we speak or act, whether we eat, or drink, or wear, in all things our motives should be to *please God*. Enoch had the testimony that he *pleased God*, not only in some, but in all things. If therefore the church in the present day is tarnished with discordant sentiments, and scarcely one member

composing the church can be found without *spot* or *wrinkle* of some kind, few, very few, can stand before God unblamable and unrebukeable in his sight. Is the idea absurd, to suppose a pure and Holy God will cast her off? That Christ will spew the lukewarm church out of His mouth? and bring in a *purser*, better state of things in the church on earth. God promised to conduct the Israelites from Egypt, to a land flowing with milk and honey, and although there were more than six hundred thousand *men* who received that promise, yet only two out of all that number, entered into the promised land. Hence the apostle to the Gentiles admonishes the church in these significant words, "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Heb. iv, 1. We should *fear* with a prudent, precautionary fear, at every step we take; *fear* lest we should err from the straight and narrow path marked out for our pursuit, by the Saviour's tears, and sweat, and blood. *Fear* lest we should at any time grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and cause Him to depart from us. *Fear* lest we should transgress the pure and holy law of God, and

be found guilty before Him. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James ii, 10. The man that steals one cent, has no honesty left in his character, he is altogether a rogue.

Thus in view of God's holy character, His hatred of sin, and the delinquent state of the church, and more especially when we reflect on the dealings of God with His chosen people, both before and since the incarnation of the Eternal Son of God, we should tremble for our fate. Should fly to the fountain for sin and pollution, to the blood of the Lamb, nor ever rest until every stain of sin is washed away, and then *watch* and *pray* always with strong faith in Christ, that our garments may be kept pure and undefiled. We should strive to enter into the ark of safety with Noah, not now a wooden ark, but into Christ's arms of redeeming and purifying love; then, and then only, shall we be safe. With Lot we should leave Sodom—the spirit, and customs, and fashions of an ungodly world, and escape to the mountain of Jesus' dying love; nor like Lot's wife, ever look back. When the witnesses are slain, the *pure in heart*, the spotless children of God will be safe, and

saved from the fire of God's anger which shall consume all who are found bearing the mark of the beast, viz. sin in its most refined shade, in its most imposing and deceptive garb.

XXIII.

ADDITIONAL REASONS TO CONVINCE THE INCREDULOUS.

To those who are still incredulous, unwilling to believe that any evil will befall the church, although they cling to it with as much tenacity and as much delusive obstinacy as the Catholics cling to *Peter*, as the rock against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, we would ask what is the real, the rational meaning of our Saviour's words, when he says, in regard to one of the witnesses, the Jews, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke xxi, 24. There are two particulars embraced in this declaration, first, the fulness of the Gentiles, and secondly, the restoration or the resurrection of those Jewish dry bones. In regard to the first, viz. the fulness of the Gentiles, many suppose it means their entire conversion, when they shall

be converted to God, and filled with the fulness of God, shall shine forth in the image of God, and influenced by the meek and lowly spirit of Christ. But, judging from the past and the present discordant and imperfect state of the *church*, (when we use this word, we must include the Catholic church as well as the Protestant—Christ is not divided,) what rational hope is there to influence the expectations of the most credulous, that a time will ever arrive when the entire church will perfectly harmonize and honor her great head by dwelling together as one family of God upon earth. Of such an event, of such a state existing in our world's history, effected by the instrumentalities now in operation, the most sanguine member or minister of the church, must despond, there is no *prospect*, there is no *hope*. Hence, we argue that the fulness of the Gentiles, must mean the period when the cup of their iniquity is *full*. That state described by the angel, when he commanded the angel having a sharp sickle in his hand, to thrust in his sickle, and reap, for the harvest of the earth is *ripe*; the Gentiles have had their day, and have filled up the full measure of their iniquity, that period specified in the following awful declarations :

“After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power ; and the earth was lighted with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon, (viz. the corrupt church, Catholic and Protestant,) the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works ; in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her : For she saith in her heart I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come

in *one day*, death and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning. Standing afar off for fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in *one hour* is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth, shall weep over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more. The merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyne wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly, are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things which were

made rich by her, shall stand afar off, for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas ! that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls ! For in one hour so great riches is come to naught. And every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, what city is like unto this great city ! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas ! that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea, by reason of her costliness ! for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets ; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee ; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee ; and the sound

of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the Bridegroom and of the Bride, shall be heard no more in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of the prophets, and of the saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." Rev. xviii, entire.

The characters described, and the scenes exhibited in this chapter cannot refer to the people of the world, but to the church, clothed in sackcloth, first to the Catholic, and secondly to the Protestant Church, as far as she is implicated, nor can the dreadful scenes refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, as this book was written after that awful scene. Nor can they be applied to any period after the introduction of the millennium, after all shall become righteous, such a supposition is neither reasonable nor possible; hence the whole scene, the awful drama, and the actors therein, must be realized at the second coming of Christ—at the commencement of the millennial reign of Christ on earth, when the witnesses shall be slain.

Were we to dissect and analyze the picture

given in this chapter, we should find a striking likeness to the churches of the present day. We Protestants nearly all believe that the picture of the Catholic branch cannot be painted in colors too dark for truth.

Let us, therefore, compare some of the traits given and features exhibited in this apocalyptic picture, with the character of the Protestant branch, as corrupt protestantism will be as offensive in the sight of God, as corrupt catholicism. It is said that the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her. This charge points unequivocally to the church as one of the guilty party. Let us inquire what will constitute this crime under the laws and regulations of the gospel. The words of gospel inspiration are, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be the friend of the world, is the enemy of God." James iv, 4. Therefore a desire to gain the friendship and the esteem of the world, viz. of the wealthy, the learned and the rulers of the world, will determine our character in the sight of God as *spiritual adulterers*. Nay further, to desire the riches, or honors, or pleasures of the world,

proves that our hearts are placed, in part at least, on those things; consequently we cannot love God, our legitimate husband, with *all our heart*, and *all our strength*, and *all our mind*; we become double minded, and in the eye of a pure and holy God, spiritual adulterers. If our readers should think that these views are ultra, that we run to extremes, that we raise the standard too high, let us bring the thing home honestly to our own hearts, our own most refined feelings. Let the honorable husband learn from good authority, that his wife does not love him *perfectly*, but has placed her affections *in part only*, on another man, and will he say, "this is reasonable, it is natural, it is a small matter." Not so, though his wife may solemnly protest that she loves him *better* than his rival, it will only aggravate the crime, and completely destroy the good man's peace, and render his life a burden, will make him a miserable man. This is both a reasonable and a righteous principle when applied to man; and is it either reasonable, or righteous, to say or think that the eternal, the glorious God, who has condescended to say (of the church) thy Maker is thy Husband, that because of the greatness, and *purity*, and

goodness of His character, will not notice these things, will permit His *Bride* to place her affections (even in part) on gold, or silver, or houses, or farms, or earthly ornaments; or even on *fame*, and *learning*, and the *corrupt* breath of *popular applause*? It is neither reasonable nor righteous to think this of God, neither will he be mocked, but in due time, in the great day of *His wrath*, those acts of fornication will be exposed and punished with everlasting banishment from the presence of God, and the glory of His power, when He shall come to be admired by all His saints, and to place His legitimate and purified Bride on His own throne of dignity, and power, and great glory.

Then will not the spiritual adulterers, and those who cried croaker, croaker, ultra, fanaticism, on earth, rise in their dignity, and say with triumphant assurance, now you see that God was not that rigid, and unreasonable Being you represented him to be. You now see that we shine in glory and honor, without one tinge of shame on our cheek, though we did indulge in the good things of earth, though with the dignitaries of the world we lived deliciously, though we did love to be called Rabbi, Rabbi, and because

of our talent and learning we claimed the highest seats in the synagogue, and were called Rev. and D. D., our learned and distinguished friend, &c.

Beloved readers, in that great day, the scene will be changed, and the *humble, holy*, self-denying faithful followers of Jesus will with Him be honored and exalted to wear a crown of eternal glory; while those who loved the world in any of its refined modifications, though they may come saying, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matt. vii, 22, 23. They were deceived and carried their delusion to the gate of heaven, and there plead their own good works, their mixed service, and all was done too in Christ's name. They had preached, and sinners had been converted—thus they had cast out devils in Christ's name, and yet will He declare, on that momentous occasion, "I never knew you," I never knew you as my humble, holy, cross-bearing followers, ye were not such—and now you must depart from my presence and the glory of my power forever.

Seeing, therefore, that many have been deceived, and many will be deceived and ruined for ever, should we not carefully examine our hearts, our conduct, our desires, and our *motives* in all our actions through life? Our eye must be *single*, our *heart* must be *pure*, and then will all the rivulets issuing therefrom be pure also. *Self*, the old Adam, must be *crucified*, and Christ must be *all*. All must proceed from Christ, and all must return to the Lord Jesus. *Christ in us* the hope of glory—and with the apostle to the Gentiles, we should say honestly and understandingly, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Phil. i, 21. We should be able to say, for to me to live is Christ, to do Christ’s will, to have an eye single to His honor and glory in all things—therefore we live not to gratify self, or to accumulate wealth, or to secure the favor or applause of men—Christ is, and must be, our Alpha and our Omega. All must begin and end in Christ, not in name, but in truth and righteousness.

XXIV.

A CASE OF CONSCIENCE, OR OUR MOTIVES EXAMINED.

LET us now examine for a moment a point of infinite importance, because it is the most dangerous.

In pursuing our literary studies, in gaining earthly knowledge, is our eye single? is our motive *pure*? is our object and desire honestly to please Christ, and save souls? Self left out of sight—while Christ's glory and the salvation of souls is purely our object and desire! Are we studying in these fields of science very hard to qualify us the better to preach the gospel to the *poor*? to whom in an especial manner we are sent? Though the rich, and great, and wise ones of the world may be saved, yet their number will be few, and their case is almost hopeless. Thus, while Christ says, the poor have the gospel preached unto them, and it is as hard for a rich man to enter into heaven as for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle.

And the apostle to the Gentiles, that wise Master builder marks out our duty, and says, "For you see your calling, brethern, how that not many *wise* men after the flesh, not many *mighty*, not many *noble* are *called*: but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." 1 Cor. i, 26, 27. If, therefore, our motives, as ministers of Christ, in the pursuit of literary knowledge is not to qualify us to preach the gospel as Christ and His apostles have directed us, our motive may possibly be sinister, self-interest, our own character, as ministers, the applause of others, &c. The same honorable gospel rule should be observed in all things, in all we do, and say. Not self, but Christ, not ease or wealth or fame, but souls—blood-bought immortal souls.

Is the cross a prominent point in all our studies? While we are ardently pursuing the path of literature, is the cross kept in view—can we say this will be a cross to us, but we will bear it for Christ's sake. The great men will mock and despise us but we will endure it all.

If I am anxious to shine in the literary cir-

cle, to be honored and applauded of men, and thus gain the "*friendship*" of the world, I array myself as an enemy against God, and thus become a *spiritual adulterer*. The rock is to be found in the ocean, in every part of it, through which we all have to sail, *self-ease, honor, money, property, equipage, dress, furniture*, these are all arrayed on the side of the world to draw us away from Christ. Through the ocean of life those dangerous rocks are scattered, and frequently they lie so deep that the eye without spiritual anointing cannot see them, and ere we are aware of our position we find our little bark on some one of those sunken broken craggs emanating from the original quarry—the *love of the world—self-love, the friendship of the world*, which will finally wreck our souls in the gulf of *spiritual adultery*, while we call God our Father, and ourselves the *Bride*, the Lamb's wife. It is said in the above description of character, "the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her." It is now quite common to have political characters of the highest order, to deliver speeches and addresses at our popular meetings to raise money. We have been pained and mortified to

see the lawyer, and the statesman, without any pretensions to piety, (whose moral characters would not bear the light of close examination,) in our churches, houses dedicated to, and set apart for the worship of the living God, delivering popular lectures to influence the wandering audience to give their money to do the work of God ! The character and ability of these wicked men who have no real fear of God before their eyes, is sounded aloud by the church previous to the meeting, and after their service and speeches are closed, their performances are published, and lauded and flattered in the most disgusting strains ! Thus the kings, the rulers of this world, and the church meet together in fraternal affection, and are guilty of spiritual fornication ; notwithstanding the awful declaration of God, that whosoever was found with the mark of the beast on his forehead, or in his hand, shall drink of the wine of God's wrath which shall be poured without mixture on them for ever. And yet we cry *peace*, peace, while sudden destruction is coming upon us. Our Saviour says, "If the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch." O may we hearken to the admonitory voice of God before it shall be forever

too late—calling, “Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ will give thee light.” Come out of her my people. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out *from among* them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us *cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*” 2 Cor. vi, 14 to 18, and vii, 1.

There is an old and true adage, that birds of a feather will flock together. A plain, but close observer of human nature says, show me your company, and I will tell you your character.

Not only do we invite and bring into the Lord's house worldly minded and unholy statesmen and lawyers, but our ministers are in turn invited to open their political meetings and public exhibitions, and even balls and parties, with prayer, to sweeten and sanction their unhallowed doings by the semblance of religion.

May it not, therefore, be said, even of the Protestant church, that the kings or rulers of the earth have committed fornication with her. And of a large majority of us, the cutting language of inspiration is strictly applicable—"Ye adulterers and adulteresses know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God, and whosoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God." The Lord Jesus speaks in plain, strong, unmistakeable language, and says, "Except ye deny yourselves, and take up your cross, and follow me *daily*, ye cannot be my disciples."

Yet most of us pay no attention to the foregoing thrilling declaration, we are not willing to fast even one day in a week, though Paul informs us that he was oft in fasting. Thus, to an alarming extent, we disregard the injunctions and example of our Divine Master, and His disci-

ples ; but the moment the world speaks, almost every ear is attent, and every knee is seen to bow at the shrine of that flimsy, fickle goddess, fashion. Let her order a change in our costume, coat or vest, bonnet or dress, and obedience or conformity is not only promptly seen, but universally practiced. It is a crime of no ordinary magnitude to obey the greatest men on earth more than God, but to disregard God and yield implicit obedience to the dictates of the most degraded portion of an ungodly world, presents a spectacle too dark and mortifying for serious contemplation. And do we really suppose that the Divine eye is blind to those scenes, or that He has so far changed his character as to behold sin, at least with allowance ? or do we really believe that His word is a nullity ? That word that is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. That word can no more change or fall to the ground than God himself can cease to be ; nor can God's great mercy annul His most rigid justice. No, justice must stand forever. Could man have been re-

deemed without meeting the full and perfect demand of justice, without the payment of the whole amount of the penalty incurred by the violation of God's law, it is more than presumable that Christ would not have died to meet in guilty man's stead, the stern and immutable demand of Divine Justice. Hence, our Saviour's prayer in view of that awful scene, "O my Father, if it be *possible*, let this cup pass from me." If, therefore, the Eternal Son of God suffered death to meet the demand of Divine Justice, that God's word should not be impaired in the slightest degree, is it not perfectly reasonable, that man, as far as it is in his power through the grace imparted by our Lord Jesus Christ, should keep the law of God? Does not justice demand it? Jesus not only died to meet the infinite demand of the law, to magnify, and make it honorable, but to enable us (all mankind) to fear God, and keep *all* His commandments *always*.

If, therefore, we neglect this great salvation, how shall we escape? The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Sin is the transgression of the *law*. Therefore we should give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any

time we should let them slip; for if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall *we* escape if we neglect so great salvation? Though we are not saved by the works of the law, yet through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we may, we can and must keep all the commandments and requirements of God's law. Hence the beloved disciple says, "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know him and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him." 1 John ii, 3, 4.

XXV.

AN EXPOSTULATION ADDRESSED TO THE CHURCH.

IN view, therefore, of the purity of God's character and rigid demands of divine justice, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ freely offered to poor fallen man, to enable him to obey the gospel of the Son of God, and to keep all His commandments, is it unreasonable or unjust or cruel, that delinquents should be cut off? When the Lord Jesus comes again to restore the kingdom to Israel, to establish His kingdom of truth, and righteousness and love, upon earth, it will be said—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still." It will be too late to correct errors, and secure slighted mercies. Our blessed Saviour has plainly informed us, that at that momentous period it will be as it was in the days of Noah, when the antideluvians were overthrown, and when wicked Sodom was destroyed. Then will the delinquent witnesses be slain. The awful scenes and circumstances that will be exhibited at that time, have been described and

adverted to in God's holy book from Genesis to Revelation; if therefore we are found without the wedding garment, unprepared, we must perish, and our blood will be upon our own heads.

Few there are, we are well convinced, that will be willing to believe that the present state of the church will be overturned. The Catholics cling to the rock, and feel assured that the gates of hell shall never prevail against them, notwithstanding the multitudes who are recognized as legitimate members of the church, and are guilty of almost every crime to be found in the catalogue of sin and iniquity. They belong to the original church, are placed upon the rock and must be safe, hence their priests will give the worst of them, at the close of life, (if they have not been guilty of the unpardonable sin of heresy,) a passport to secure a safe passage into purgatory, and then, if their living friends have money, in due time they will be prayed out of that nondescript abode, safe into heaven. We Protestants, however, can give those poor deceived mortals up for lost, without hope or mercy; but not so with our church, we have protested against the corruptions of that fallen

church, and we must be saved. Our doctrine and usages are all orthodox, our instrumentalities, our numerous and most excellent societies, amply supported by the liberality of the friends of genuine religion, so much money raised, and so many missionaries, and agents and colporters, &c. in the field, so many tracts and papers publishing every month, and annually, the great success of our party—to suppose that God will cast them off and overturn those blessed institutions! It is impossible, we cannot believe it. And besides all these things, witness the testimony of thousands upon thousands who do assure us that God has not only pardoned their sins, but that he has purified their hearts; and besides those living witnesses, multitudes die, bearing a decided testimony that they are going to heaven; and yet your views would unchristianize nearly the entire church, and invalidate their dying testimony. To all these things we reply, that our business is not to condemn any human being, (the *law* of God does that,) but to be co-workers with Christ in saving the world, by pointing sinners and formal professors to the Lord Jesus Christ as their atoning sacrifice, and to His spirit and example for their pattern, and

all His words, His law of perfect love as the rule, and only infallible rule, both for their faith and practice. Christ teaches us to pray (nor could He ever lead us into error) that God's will may be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. This elevated state must be practicable, or that petition will lead us into error. Though we are not qualified, and are forbidden to judge our brother, yet may we safely adopt and 'use the rule given to us by the Master, "*By their fruits ye shall know them.*" Judging by this rule, how many can we find in any branch of the church, who do the will of God as it is done in heaven? Are there any? Alas, how few the number, hardly exceeding the Noahs and the Lots. And yet we presume to assert that God will not cast us off, His own declaration to the contrary notwithstanding! We do not wish it to be so, therefore we will not believe it. Thus the Omnipotent Saviour of our sin-disordered world, must continue ever to be dishonored by our imperfect service, and sinful imperfections.

Let us by the same gospel rule, try another standard. "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*"

How many now in the pale of the church, can meet the heathen who lived and died without the bible, when we were living at our ease, clothed in purple and fine linen and faring sumptuously (compared with thousands) every day, and say, honestly, we loved your souls, as our own souls; we have done all we could to enlighten your minds and save your souls? How many of us who are called respectable christians, and compassed about with the comforts of life, can meet the poor suffering widow and her hungry orphans, and say confidently and honestly, I loved you as myself? The number would not very far exceed the Noahs and the Lots; and yet we think it dreadful, even fanaticism to suppose that God will cast us off, though He destroyed the antideluvians, and the Sodomites, while their light and privileges were not one-hundredth part as great as ours!

Let us profit by the admonitory precaution administered to the Gentile or christian church. "For if God spared not the natural branches take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God, on them which fell, severity; but towards thee,

goodness, if thou continue in *His* goodness ; otherwise thou shalt be cut off." Rom. xi, 21, 22.

This is a precautionary admonition, couched in prophetic language. We have not continued in Christ's "*goodness*," viz. in the plain precepts and spirit of the gospel. Judging from the most favorable symptoms for the past half century, how long will it be, before the whole world shall be converted to God, and all God's family live together in perfect harmony and love, when God's will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven ? Would that desirable period ever arrive ? Reason says, never ; experience says, never ; but God's immutable word of promise, says it can and shall be so ; Christ's prayer will not always continue to be a dead letter ; the will of God shall yet be done on earth as it is done in heaven, when all shall know the Lord, from the least unto the greatest, when nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain, when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together in peaceful harmony and love.

XXVI.

A REASONABLE INQUIRY ANSWERED.

AN important inquiry will here be made. When shall that happy day be ushered in? God has reserved the knowledge of this glorious event to himself, to whom secret things belong, and those things only which are revealed to us and our children. It is best that it should be so; if the hour of our death had here been revealed to the human family, it would have been an evil of serious import. Neither is it proper or important that we should know the precise time when the millennial glory shall dawn upon our benighted world. The apostle to the Gentiles, in reply to an inquiry made by the church of Thessalonica, says: "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a

woman with child, and they shall not escape.”
1 Thess. v, 1, 2, 3.

In regard to the introduction of that glorious period, our Divine Master says, “*Watch*, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth *come*. But know this, if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.”
Matt. xxiv, 42, 43, 44.

The Lord Jesus has also informed us, that great efforts would be made, previous to the introduction of that day. Zealously engaged in the cause of Christ, deceiving and being deceived, and in view of those things, he gives us the following caution and information. “Then if any man shall say unto you, lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not, for there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before, wherefore, if they shall say unto you, behold, He is in the desert; go not forth; behold, he is in the secret

chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Matt. xxiv, 23—27. Further in regard to that great day, and the imposing and delusive scenes and efforts to make proselytes, rather than humble, holy, bible christians; Christ gives us the following salutary caution. "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the earth. *Watch* ye, therefore, and *pray* always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass." Luke xxi, 34, 35, 36. The Lord Jesus has given us further instruction in regard to the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, the introduction of His glorious kingdom when He shall reign, as He now rules in heaven. "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man; they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and

destroyed them all. Likewise, also, as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all; even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." Luke xvii, 26—30.

In the face of all those solemn and momentous declarations in regard to coming events, it behooves us to attend to the injunction, "*be ye also ready,*" stand among the Noahs and the Lots, unblamable and unrebukable in God's sight. We can lose nothing, and may gain everything by being ready, *holy in heart, in life,* and in all manner of conversation, knowing that for every idle word we speak, we shall have to give an account in the day of judgment.

INTIMATIONS OF ITS NEAR APPROACH.

The signs of the times—the troubled elements which characterize the days in which we live, are indeed ominous, and proclaim aloud in wisdom's ear, the day of the Lord draweth nigh. The great and dreadful day of the Lord, when Christ shall come again in power and great glo-

ry, to establish his kingdom in universal triumph, when God's will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. Amen. Come Lord Jesus and come quickly, and let all the world say, amen.

We may infer from the rapid increase of light now shining, and rapidly on the increase, the near approach of Christ. The Lord Jesus says, "*I am the light of the world.*" All light, whether moral or intellectual or scientific, must emanate from the incarnate Son of God. As the sun is the source of all the light with which our world is favored; so Christ is eminently the sun of righteousness, from whom all light must proceed. When we see the morning star, we know the sun is near; when the day dawns, he is still nearer, and as the light increases, until the king of day appears in full view to enlighten, comfort and invigorate our gloomy world.

XXVII.

AN ADDITIONAL OBJECTION ANSWERED.

GOOD, and wise, and learned men of God, cry out indignantly, away with such a fellow from the earth; his views are wild and absurd—is this indeed the order of God? Has a wise and merciful being done so much for the human family, and all to be destroyed? We cannot believe it. The great work of redemption will continue to progress and increase more and more, until the whole lump is leavened, until the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge and glory of God. “Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

It is not intimated, nor presumed in the above theory or view of coming events, that they will take place in harmony with the divine arrangements for men's redemption, or in strict accordance with the decrees and order of God, but in consequence of man's derangement, his disorder, rebellion and folly.

Why was the antideluvians destroyed, and also the cities of the plain? Was it by the order or decree of God? Was it arranged in the divine plan to make a world, and people it with rational human beings, and then drown them all but one family? Not so, but the wickedness of wicked men, caused the anger of God to be poured forth upon the rebellious inhabitants of the earth. Nor would it be difficult to prove to the satisfaction of any intelligent mind, unbiased by prejudice, that the wickedness of the present day (notwithstanding all our light, and learning, and talent, and money) is greater than it was when the antideluvians were destroyed, or the Sodomites, when their city was consumed and sunk. The significant and awful declaration of our Saviour, in comparing some event yet in the future, to those dreadful visitations upon the antideluvians and the Sodomites, is conclusive evidence that the wickedness of the people at that eventful period will be as great, or greater than the sins of those people devoted to destruction.

We have already proved, to the satisfaction of every unprejudiced mind, that those awful events predicted by the Lord Jesus, cannot yet

have been fulfilled, nor can they ever be, after the introduction of the millennium, when all shall be purified and made righteous before God.

Those who deny that the wickedness of the inhabitants of the christian world is as great or greater than those of the old world, must remember that a just and holy God will not measure our amount of guilt, so much by the actions of our life, 'as by the light we have enjoyed, the privileges we have slighted. Hence, Christ said to the proud Jews, including the Pharisees, (who were more rigid, by far, in the observance of the law of Moses, than we are in regard to Christ's law,) "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for you." Not, we presume, because their acts of infamy were greater, but because of the increased privileges enjoyed, and shamefully slighted by the latter. Therefore, judging by this sacred and divine rule, will not our punishment be greater than that inflicted upon either the antideluvians, the Sodomites or the Jews? Let us now for a moment, examine the piety of the Pharisees, and the sins of the Sodomites.

We have the character of the former, given

in the following prayer, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as the publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." The Lord Jesus did not accuse this Pharisee of making a false statement, and yet He declared that it should be more tolerable for Sodom than for that generation, in the day of judgment. It is greatly to be feared that we cannot find many in our highly favored day, who can fully measure up to the standard expressed in the Pharisee's prayer. Nor were the Pharisees as a sect few in number in our Saviour's day. Another of that sect, of high standing in the church, and not inferior to any of the disciples of our Lord, could say, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." This declaration, doubtless, refers to Paul's integrity and honesty when he was a sinner and a Pharisee, while he was thus in *darkness*, he lived up fully to his privileges, as far as he understood them.

Let us now look into and investigate the character and crimes of the Sodomites, given by the highest authority, even God himself, "As I live saith the Lord God, Sodom thy sis-

ter, hath not done, she nor her daughter, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. Behold, this was the sin of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread and abundance of idleness was in her, and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy." Ezekiel xvi, 48, 49. Such were the crimes of Sodom, as preferred against her by the righteous Judge of all the earth; doubtless they were guilty of others.

Let us now impartially look into the heart of most of our large christian cities, and our eyes will be disgusted and our hearts sickened with the sight, the deeds of deep and nameless depravity found there, and exposed to public view every day, and published in the daily records of the day. But who can form a correct idea of the awful picture which lies obscured from human vision, and seen only by the eye of an omniscient God! And when we turn our eyes away from this repulsive scene, and look into the church, God's house on earth, we can scarcely find *one* member who is (as he has been taught to pray) *doing the will of God as it is done in heaven*; and very few who can *humbly* and *honestly* say, they are living up to all their

gospel privileges. And yet our wise brethren are insulted, and think it a dreadful heresy to suppose that God will destroy us, as He did the antideluvians, though our light is more than an hundred-fold greater than was theirs, and our crimes, at least equal if not greater than theirs were. It is true we have a few righteous men left in our Sodom, to preserve and keep us from destruction; a few Lots, and a few Noahs; yet it is greatly to be feared, that the number of those holy men is decreasing; the alluring, deceptious world is drawing them away from the cross, and binding them fast in the arms of Mammon, while the watchmen assure us that the ark is moving on most successfully; hence, that day will come upon us unawares; for as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

As it regards the sin or the morality of the antideluvians, we know but little; they had all corrupted their way and become desperately wicked, with one honorable exception—one family was then found righteous before God. Their light, however, when compared with ours, was profound darkness.

Some learned and intelligent writers think

that there were as many men on the earth at the time of the flood, as there are in the present day; and yet they had but one preacher of righteousness and no bibles, no printing presses, nothing, no, nothing compared with our highly favored day; yet they were all swept away with the flood. This should be a salutary, as it is a solemn warning to us, especially as the Lord Jesus Christ has assured us that the approaching doom of mankind (or His second coming) will be like the fate of the wicked antediluvians, and the more wicked Sodomites.

We should not, therefore, condemn and find fault with a plain, rational view of a most impressive and highly important portion of God's word, because it specifies the exposure and overthrow of a discordant and impure people, who are called the Church of Christ; but inquire honestly, are we living up to all our gospel duties and privileges? Are we what we should be? Are we what the gospel requires us to be? Are we well prepared to meet the bridegroom at his approach, should it be at the midnight hour, should it be this night? Could we meet the Lord Jesus with as much confidence and joy as an affectionate wife would meet her husband

who had been absent a few months? Have we the spirit of Christ? If we have not, the plain word declares we are none of His! When Jesus was reviled, he reviled not again, and with His expiring breath prayed for His murderers! Have we the spirit which thus influenced and governed our blessed Saviour, through life, and in death?

If we discover that in these things we are deficient, greatly deficient, let us not cry peace, peace, when sudden destruction may be at our door.

If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle? Should we not rather sound an alarm in Zion, not enthusiastically, but righteously, rationally and scripturally, that we and our friends may not perish, and perish eternally. May we all take the alarm, and now begin in earnest to set our house in order, that we may not die eternally, but live and reign with Christ, in His kingdom, when all sin and sinners shall be destroyed, when nothing shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain.

Let us begin, like good Josiah, to cleanse the temple, the important temple of our heart, that

the church of Christ, purchased with His own blood, may be found without spot or wrinkle, that we may stand before God unblamable and unrebukable in His sight. Amen.

PIOUS REFLECTIONS,
WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED SOME YEARS SINCE
IN THE
CHRISTIAN REPOSITORY, PHILADELPHIA,
AND THE
PRACTICAL PREACHER, OHIO,
AFFECTIONATELY RECOMMENDED
TO ALL
Who Love the Lord Jesus Christ
IN SINCERITY.

“Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your ownelves. Know ye not your ownelves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.” 2 Cor. xiii, 5.



What kind of a day have you had?

CHRISTIAN PURITY.

PURITY ELEVATES AND HAPPIFIES.

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” 1 JOHN iii, 3.

THIS text exhibits the christian's *hope*; its *character*, its *object*, and the salutary influence it exerts on his *life and conduct*.

1st. *Its character.* It is a *rational*, a *living hope*. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope.” 1 Peter i, 3. It is not only a “*lively*,” or living hope, because the poor dead sinner has been born again, and adopted into God's family on earth, but it has for its foundation an unclouded *present* knowledge of the fact. “*Now are we the sons of God.*” It is not an object of *hope*, that he has been born again, and that he is now a child of God—this he has fully realized; on this solid basis firmly rests his *hope*, and from that strong position,

and holy eminence, his *hope* stretches her arms into the deepest recesses of eternity, confidently grasping all the realities and blessings of an unending heaven, where the child of God is placed beyond the reach of death, or of human contingencies.

2d. *Its object.* The object on which the Christian's *hope* places her eyes, and around which she throws her unyielding arms of expectation and desire, is the *appearance of Jesus Christ*. "*When he shall appear.*" Ver. 2. This glorious event is more dear to him, and more to be desired than life, and all the glories of this sin disordered world. More anxious is he to see his Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, than the affectionate wife is to see the return of her absent husband; although he has only been from home a few months, the appearance of her husband absorbs all other thoughts, and excites an indescribable anxiety to realize that to her of all other objects the most important. She does not inquire, nor is she anxious to know, *how* he will come; whether he will return walking on his feet, or riding on his horse, or in his carriage; this to her is matter of indifference; her great desire is to see her absent husband; nor

is she particular as it regards the hour of his arrival, whether it be in the evening, or morning, or at midnight—"welcome, welcome husband at any moment!" Would not this be the sentiment, and the language of every virtuous wife whose husband had been long absent? And shall the Bride, the Lamb's wife, manifest indifference in regard to the appearance of the Bridegroom? If so, is it not conclusive evidence that her love has waxed cold, if indeed it has not been placed on some other object? Should not the ardent, unceasing language of every child of God be, "come, Lord Jesus, and come quickly—now, this moment?"

If the affectionate wife had no good reason to expect her absent husband's return soon, yet would she *hope*, and look with intense anxiety for that most desirable event. Not so the church. She has strong reasons to expect the *immediate* appearance of the Lord Jesus—she has his own gracious promise that he will come and will not tarry. "And behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. xxii, 12. And yet his Bride, the Church, manifests indifference on the subject, and would rather

not see Him soon! O, shame, where is thy blush! Should not the language of every sincere Christian's heart be, "come, Lord Jesus, and come quickly?" Yes, his incessant cry is, "I do *hope* for, and ardently desire the coming and glorious appearing of Him who died for me; he will bring with him a crown of eternal life, and not for me only, but for all those who love *His appearing*." This is the great *object of the Christian's hope*.

3d. *The influence this hope exerts on the Christian's life and conduct.* "He purifieth himself, even as he is pure." This standard is very high, and exalts the child of God to an elevated eminence—"even as He" (God) "is pure." There exists a very great disparity between the infant, and his wise, learned and wealthy father. The child is perfectly weak, helpless and ignorant, and yet his distinguished father, though he be a governor, or a king, considers his infant child as standing on a perfect level with himself; the child is equally honorable in his character, and perfectly identified as one with his father. This natural and plain illustration, give us at least an imperfect idea of the high and honorable state which every child

of God sustained ; while there exists an infinite disparity between the ignorent, helpless individual who had been born again, and by regeneration adopted into the family of God, and his holy, wise, omnipotent Father ; yet by virtue of his adoption into Christ's family, he becomes dear to God, and in a very important sense, raised to an equality with his heavenly Father. The child, however, is not to remain a helpless infant ; as a new born babe he should receive the sincere milk of the word that he may grow thereby ; and thus in accordance with the sentiment expressed in our text, he "*purifieth himself.*"

1st. He *purifieth his affections* : he examines his heart carefully and impartially. He knows that he must love God with *all his heart*, with *all his strength*, with *all his mind*, and his neighbor as himself. He also knows that if he loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. He therefore compares himself, his principles and affections, with the young man in the gospel, who had kept all the law, yet refused to sell his earthly possessions and give them to the poor, when his Saviour required him to do so. By an application of his Master's salutary rule, he can

ascertain definitely whether he loves the world more or less ; and if he for one moment doubts the purity of his affections he immediately adopts the Saviour's rule, he sells all and gives it to the poor, which has a direct tendency to purify his affections as it regards the world, viz. money or property. He would rather cut off his right hand, than entertain any doubts or fears respecting the *purity* of his affection for his Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. He further asks his own heart, "if all my costly goods and possessions were taken from me by any contingency, could I with good old Job bear it patiently, and praise God for that peculiar dispensation of his providence?" As a candid, honest, honorable man, he attends to this duty not only *faithfully*, but *promptly*. He is well convinced that if his wife's affections were not *purely* placed on him *now*, although she might assure him that she would love him *purely* and *exclusively* at some future period, at least before her death, it would be cruel mockery. Therefore he does not defer this momentous business with his Maker until to-morrow ; he *purifieth* his *affections promptly*.

2d. *He purifieth his motives.* Christ declares

that no man can serve two masters ; and says, "if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Enoch walked with God three hundred years, nor can two walk together unless they be agreed—unless they perfectly harmonize in sentiment and disposition. The patriarch had the testimony that he pleased God ; this should be the good man's motive in all things, and at all times : therefore, whether he eats, or drinks, or wears, or buys, or sells, he does all to please God. In eating, his *motive* is not to *gratify* his appetite, but to promote his health. His motive in wearing any kind of apparel is not to please any individual on earth, but *purely* to meet the approbation of the Lord Jesus, and humble his own heart, knowing that God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. Likewise in preaching, his motive is exclusively to please God, and benefit man ; he is well convinced that if his motive in part is to secure a good name, and gain the favor of man, or to increase his temporal gain, his *motive* is *not pure*, and will not stand the scrutinizing eye of God in the judgment day. In his literary pursuits, his studies, his motive is exclusively to please God, and benefit his hearers. He pre-

pares himself to preach the gospel (like his Divine Master) to the poor, and if the rich are profited thereby, he is well pleased. *He purifieth his motives.*

3d. *He purifieth his thoughts.* "For from within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders." Mark viii, 21. "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity *every thought* to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. x, 5. By way of purifying his *thoughts*, he honestly asks his own heart, "if all the *thoughts* I have indulged through the past week were published to the world, would I feel as calm and composed in view of the fact as I now do?" If not, then do I fear man more than God, which is very corrupt. Solemn reflection, that all our *thoughts* are perfectly known to God! He, therefore, *purifieth* his thoughts by indulging none for a moment of which he would feel ashamed if they were all published to the world, nor of which he would feel ashamed in the judgment day. If evil or impure thoughts are pressed suddenly upon his mind by surrounding and evil circumstances, he instantly rejects them, and flies promptly to the

Lord Jesus for succor and deliverance. *He purifieth his thoughts.*

4th. *He purifieth his words.* "But I say unto you, that every *idle word* that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy *words* shalt thou be justified, and by thy *words* shalt thou be condemned." Matt. xii, 36, 37. "For our conversation is in heaven." Phil. iii, 20. He honestly asks his own heart, "would I be willing to have *all the words* that I have spoken, during the past day, or week, rehearsed in public? If not, do I not fear man more than God? They are all recorded in heaven, and will soon be read out before a congregated world. The child of God purifieth his *words* by the exercise of a living consistent *faith*, which always realizes the presence of God, therefore, his words are all spoken in the immediate presence of the Lord Jesus, and to please God, nor will he be ashamed or condemned when they are publicly proclaimed before the whole world. He has never used any dissimulation at any time, or under any circumstances; nor said anything behind any man's back which he would not have said to his face. All his words have been spoken in *truth*

and *sincerity*, and in a spirit of *pure love*. He purifieth his words.

5th. *His desires*. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I *desire* beside Thee." Psalm lxxiii, 25. The child of God so far *purifieth* his *desires*, that he *only* wishes to possess and enjoy God, and all earthly things in, and by, Him. He does not desire *riches* or *poverty*, ease or pain, *life* or *death*, but God only.

In the arms and favor of his Heavenly Father, he enjoys all things richly, and can rejoice in tribulation, and take pleasure in necessities, in distresses, in persecutions; he is perfectly willing to be accounted as the filth and offscouring of all things, for Christ's sake. In God he has all his *desires* fully realized. *He purifieth his desires*.

6th. *His actions*. All his works are wrought in God, and in perfect accordance with his revealed word. Therefore, he does not conform to the world, its fashions, maxims and customs, because God's word forbids it. For the same reason, he has no desire or intention, to lay up treasure on earth. He gives liberally to all who need, as of the ability he possesseth, not

suffering his right hand to know what his left hand doeth; all, all is done in God's immediate presence, and designed purely to please the Lord Jesus Christ; and in strict conformity with His divine law, he loves his neighbor as himself. He visits the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and keeps himself unspotted from the world, knowing that this is esteemed pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father. He is not willing to indulge in the comforts and gratifications of life while his Saviour's mother, sister, or brother may need any of the necessities of life, and knowing that those who are dear to Christ, are in very many instances, in suffering circumstances, it compels him to *deny* himself the comforts of life, and to take up his cross and follow the Lord Jesus, in his holy self-denying life daily. He does nothing, no nothing to be seen of men, nor to secure their favor, but *purely to please God. He purifieth his actions.*

Dear readers, turn your eyes away from the pomp and vanity of this evil world, and your ears from the contention and discord which marks our present evil day, and attend to the above specified duties and privileges, and you

need not be afraid or ashamed to meet the Judge of all the earth, and an assembled world, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed in the Judgment Day.

SPIRITUAL VISION.

“And anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see.”—REV. iii, 18.

IT is a melancholy fact, perceptible to the eyes of the most superficial observer, that men, since the apostacy of our first parents, are universally born blind—*intellectually* and *morally* blind. Sin has despoiled all the original beauty and glory of man; the image of God has been erased from his soul, and the likeness of Satan has been inscribed on every feature of his immortal part. The child born a few years since heir to the crown of Great Britain, was as *blind* (ignorant) as the infant born in the dark land of Africa. That disability or blemish, however, can and will be removed by natural means. The child's intellectual eyes must, and will be anointed with the light of science, applied by human effort. He must commence just where the beggar or the slave begins, viz. with A, B, C, and thus by care, skill and effort, in time his intellectual eyes will be opened, so that

he may behold and enjoy all the beauties and privileges of literature and science. The moral eyes, however, are not affected either more or less (necessarily) by this process; nor can they be opened by the wisdom or power of men. God alone can open the eyes of one born morally blind. It may here be remarked, (and it should make a deep impression upon the minds of professing christians in the present age of the world,) that all who have had their intellectual eyes opened, perceive all literary objects alike. The letters have the same appearance and import; figures convey an idea of the same number; there is no discord in this respect among those who can read. Should any number of individuals, (whose intellectual eyes have been opened by education,) traveling on the highway, meet with a sign post directing the traveler to some distant point, say ten miles to Philadelphia, they would all harmonize in their sentiments—there would be no discord or dissension in regard to the intelligence inscribed on the mile post. But alas for the discordant state of christianity, even in the nineteenth century! God has given us plain written directions, and established sign posts along the

entire road leading from earth to heaven; from a land of darkness, pain and death, to a world of light, and peace, and joy, and life; yet a diversity of opinion exists in regard to the particular meaning of those directions.

The bible has been written in plain language by a good and merciful God, who is our father to guide and direct His ignorant wandering children to the kingdom of heaven; nor can we possibly believe that God who gave His Son to redeem and save our fallen and rebellious race, could design or wish to bewilder His helpless children on their journey to the eternal world, who are approaching heaven or hell with every step they make.

What, therefore, can be the real cause of the diversity of opinion which obtains among christians, those who profess to be traveling on the king's highway? Is it not because their moral eyes have not been opened?

As this is a point of infinite importance to every christian, it will be prudent to examine it thoroughly. If our moral eyes have indeed been opened, we will see spiritually, and spiritual objects as distinctly, and as satisfactorily as we perceive terrestrial things with our natural

eyes, or letters and figures with our intellectual optics. If, therefore, our moral vision is perfect, we shall always see God before our eyes—this is a great and important truth, which no reflecting man will attempt to deny. “Do I not fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.” Our blessed Saviour says, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” God is as certainly present every moment as the friend who now stands before me. Do I, therefore, see him with my spiritual, or moral eyes, or by the eye of faith, as clearly as I perceive the friend with whom I converse? If our eyes have been opened, and we do not see and set God always before our eyes, we will naturally perceive the next most important object on earth, viz. the *Bible*—God’s word which has been given to us for a directory, to point out the true and only way to heaven, and perfectly understand the real meaning of every command, of every precept, and every promise, with as much certainty and harmony, as travelers see and read the direction on the sign post. Then would every discordant sound or sentiment among christians cease, and every murmur be hushed, and every

fear quieted ; while a perfect, constant, universal principle of confidence in God, and reconciliation to His word and will, would naturally secure to our souls peace and contentment under all the vicissitudes of this eventful life.

When we turn our eyes to the heavenly directory (*the bible*) and read "Be ye holy for I am holy"—"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," and again, "Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Realizing the import of those precious commands in our heart, we would perfectly understand their salutary meaning without the aid of learned commentators, or of controversy. When the man with his eyes open reads the following inscriptions recorded in Matt. xii, 36, and Ephes. v, 34, "But I say unto you, that *every idle word* that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment." "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not once be named among you, as becometh saints ; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor *jesting*, which are not convenient ; but rather of giving thanks." He knows perfectly those who indulge in those forbidden things, are walking in the road which

leads to death and ruin. To what an alarming extent do these vices obtain in the church! *Idle words, foolish talking and jesting*, alas how common, even among those of us who minister in holy things. Surely we do not recollect that it is written in that holy book, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

The next object which will naturally attract the attention of those whose eyes have been made to see clearly, will be the good hand of God, in regulating His divine providences. Whether they are called to drink of the cup of adversity or prosperity, they know that all things shall work together for their good. Thus they journey on through life, trusting in God. Every moment they see His gracious hand extended to guide all their steps—to defend their defenceless heads, and to sustain and comfort them in every hour of distress and danger. They fearlessly and faithfully follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. They hear the Lord Jesus say, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." Therefore, from their enemies they have nothing to fear, while they keep their eyes open,

and steadfastly placed on a crucified Saviour, a risen Redeemer. They possess the spirit of Christ now, and have the promise of eternal life in heaven, and they want no more.

Secondly.—Inquire how we may secure this great and important blessing? How may our spiritual and moral eyes be opened? The counsel directs us to “anoint our eyes with *eye-salve*.” By the eye-salve recommended, I apprehend, the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ is meant. As none but God can open the natural eyes of one born blind, neither can our moral blindness be removed, and spiritual vision restored to the soul, but by the power and grace of Jesus Christ. The grace of God should be diligently sought for, and applied in our closet, on our knees by humble, fervent, faithful prayer. Applications made to our natural eyes, generally give acute pain, so with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in its operation; in the form of deep and pungent *conviction*, it is exceedingly painful, especially if it is applied in an evangelical manner.

When David felt its piercing influence, he immediately cried, “The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon

me ; I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord. O Lord I beseech thee deliver my soul." The publican, under the influence of converting *grace*, smote upon his breast, and exclaimed in the agony of his soul, "God be merciful to me a sinner." When the blind man was requested to tell how his eyes were opened, he said, "A man that is called Jesus, made clay and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, go to the pool of Siloam and wash ; and I went and washed and I received sight." In like manner when the poor blind sinner feels the grace of conviction piercing him deeply and painfully, he may go to the pool of Siloam, the redeeming love of Jesus, there he may wash by faith and receive his sight. He then sees Christ crucified every moment before his eyes. He sees his duty and his danger, and walks securely leaning on the Lord Jesus. He would rather suffer death than grieve the Holy Spirit of God, or trifle in his Saviour's presence. Neither does he indulge in gloomy or desponding reflections. He can confidently say with the pious Psalmist, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for thou art with

me ; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." He sees God ever before his eyes, in His word and in his providences, and confidently claims all his great and precious promises, and by faith appropriates them to himself. Hence he is rich in poverty ; strong in weakness ; wise in ignorance, and happy and contented amidst all the storms of this sin disordered world.

As there are two kinds of light, or vision, it will be necessary to examine this important subject with great care. The apostle exhorts us to examine ourselves whether we be in the faith ; prove your own selves, &c. Our Saviour says expressively, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." If we mistake, and substitute intellectual and scientific, for spiritual or moral vision, it will prove ruinous to our souls. There is, however, no necessity that we should be deceived, if we attend prayerfully to the marks of distinction which exists between these two sources of light.

Spiritual, moral light deeply humbles the creature, man, and exalts the Saviour. Grace causes us to dread the fatal influence of the world ; hence when our moral eyes are made to see clearly, we avoid the smiles and applause

of men, and dread popularity and wealth, as we would deadly poison, while we cleave with fear and trembling to the cross of Christ every moment.

Intellectual light generally inspires much confidence in our abilities and learning, and excites within our bosom rather a desire than a dread of the admiration and applause of men, and naturally inclines us to be called Rabbi, Rabbi, notwithstanding our Saviour's impressive admonition, "How can ye believe which receive honor, one of another?" Under the sacred influence of *grace*, true moral light or vision, inclines and ennobles us when we are reviled, to bless; when persecuted, to suffer it; when defamed, to entreat; and makes us willing to be made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things. The language of grace is, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

The light of science influences us generally, to admire splendid talents, eloquence of language, the beauty of rhetoric, &c., which has a tendency to vitiate our taste, and renders the

plain, unlettered, simple preaching of Christ crucified insipid. Hence a grammatical error or an awkward gesture or expression, is offensive to the refined sensibility of the wise and learned, and they are ready to cry out, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, how can he teach us the way to heaven?" Scientific light or vision, unaccompanied with great grace, (which is frequently the case,) causes the offence of the cross to cease, and emboldens us to climb up some other way than by the cross of Christ. Hence, the great importance of the counsel in our text. "*Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see.*"

JUSTICE.

“He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.”—LUKE xvi, 10.

JUSTICE is a divine principle inseparably blended with the eternal throne of God. “Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne. Mercy and truth shall go before thy face.” Psalms lxxxix, 14. “The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be *just*, ruling in the fear of God—And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.” 2 Sam. xxiii, 3, 4. “A false balance is abomination to the Lord; but a *just* weight is His delight.” Proverbs xi, 1. *Justice* is a fundamental principle in our holy religion, one of the immovable pillars on which the Church of Christ must ever rest. That well known sentiment expressed by the Athenians in reply to an unrighteous proposition made by Themisto-

cles, "*Let justice prevail, if the pillars of heaven shall fall,*" should cause many professed christians to blush. God himself could not pardon one sinner, until the full measure of *justice* in all its bearings had been met by His Eternal Son. The slightest degree of *injustice* (known to be such) will as certainly exclude us from heaven, as murder. Nor will this divine principle admit of any compromise. The laws of justice are stern and inflexible. The moment we diverge (knowingly) one hair's breadth from the straight line of justice, we forfeit every righteous claim to that elevated principle. The man who steals, or defrauds his neighbor only to the value of one cent, becomes a rogue a dishonest man, as certainly as if he had have stolen a thousand dollars. Hence we perceive the infinite importance of our Saviour's declaration, "He that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much." "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Every prudent man will therefore pause, and weigh well his actions, desires, and motives, lest peradventure he might be found wanting, when he is weighed in the balance of eternal truth and *justice*.

If we have in our possession, anything which belongs to another man, and he demands of us that which is his own, and we have it in our power, and refuse to comply with his request by withholding any part thereof, it is an act of *injustice*. It will be conceded by every intelligent person, that all we possess in this world, belongs to God—our souls and our bodies are His—all we have and are, including our money and property are His also. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. When God demands our heart, and strict obedience to His divine law, we are bound promptly to surrender all to the rightful Sovereign of heaven and earth. If we keep back any part even of our affections, it is an unjust, and also an unrighteous act. If we indulge one desire in our hearts to procure any article for less than its real value, *it is the quintessence of injustice*. Our Divine Redeemer says, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." This view of the subject will bear very hard on every species of speculation. Christ declares that it is as hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, as it is for a camel to pass through the eye of a nee-

dle. Few ever become rich except by speculation. After man's apostacy from his Maker, God said, "In the sweat of thy face, shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." Therefore the only just and righteous way for every man to procure his sustenance is by honest labor, in the diligent pursuit of some honest calling. It will be said, "in pursuing this course, we must remain poor." Admit the supposition, is it not the most desirable place for us, as Christ blesses the poor, and denounces an awful woe against the rich? We should also reflect seriously upon the case and fate of the rich man and the beggar, related by the Lord Jesus for our especial instruction. If we hire any species of property of our neighbor, we are in justice bound to give him a fair and righteous consideration for the use of it, whether it be a house, or a farm, or any other description of property. If we borrow money, we are justly bound to pay for the use of it the amount of interest specified by the laws of the state or country in which we live. It will be at once admitted by every intelligent individual that the silver and the gold all belongs to God, the cattle also upon a thousand hills are His. God has a

just and righteous claim on all things which His hand has made. Our heavenly Father giveth all His needy children their daily bread by blessing their labor, and unequivocally commends them not to lay up treasure on earth, and enjoins upon them a constant and daily course of self-denial. Since the introduction of sin into the world, Satan claims this world as his possession by virtue of the victory he gained over man, for whose benefit all earthly things were created.

The Lord Jesus did not deny Satan's claim when he asserted it in Christ's presence. "And the devil taketh him up into a high mountain, and showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time; and the devil said unto him, all this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it." Although the devil has no legitimate title to these things, for they all belong to God, yet by virtue of his conquest over God's children, their claim to those earthly privileges have been forfeited.

When Christ conquered Satan in the wilderness, and finally and effectually on the cross,

He deposed him of his boasted possessions; those earthly things are through Jesus Christ restored to man, only in accordance with his permission and directions. When, therefore, we attempt to lay up treasure on earth, or to accumulate more than a sufficiency for the plain wants of life, we rebel against our rightful Sovereign, and virtually say, "We cannot trust thee, O Lord, but if we have money or property to lean upon in the cloudy day, we can rest contented, and be perfectly happy." As this is a solemn and important subject, one in which we are all deeply interested, let us examine it thoroughly. We see numerous persons with very little property or money, live and support their families; why could we not do the same? Only one legitimate reason can be assigned, viz. we are not willing to be poor. Will, not therefore, a just and holy God hold us strictly accountable for all we possess over and above a sufficiency to support our family in accordance with the rules and regulations given by our Lord Jesus Christ? Do we make a just and righteous estimate of all our extra *property* and *money*—all our unnecessary *furniture* and *clothing*, &c., and do we regularly pay into the

Lord's treasury annually the legal interest on the amount? If not, can we in the estimation of a righteous God be considered *just stewards*? The poor man who works for his daily bread, will appear as a witness against us in the day of judgment, and prove that we too might have lived, and have supported one family as he did, without having earthly possessions or money to depend on.

As the church is the light of the world, and compared by the Lord Jesus to a city set on a hill, her light should uniformly shine on a benighted world illuminating the path of every wayfaring traveler passing from time to eternity. We should not, therefore, shrink from the most rigid investigation of our life and conduct at all times, and under all circumstances. If we appropriate that which belongs to another person to our own use, without his permission, it is an act of *injustice*. As, therefore, the silver and gold all belongs to God, do we ask His permission when we apply it to our own use? It is reasonable and right that we should do so, because it belongs to God, and we may at any time enter into our closet and ask Our Heavenly Father's permission when we are about to

purchase any article, whatever the value may be, much or little.

We live in an age of wonders—a day of great and increasing light. It is reasonable to infer from the pages of God's word and the signs of the times, that the important period is at hand when He whose right it is to reign, will take to himself his great power, and establish on earth his kingdom of universal peace and righteousness. The revolutionary spirit now abroad in the earth, and the convulsive throes felt by nearly all nations—the power that is now casting down thrones, and kingdoms, and high heads, will continue to exert all its powerful influence until all oppression and pride, and *injustice*, and evil of every kind which exists either in Church or State shall be swept from the earth. It is, therefore, very important that we should deal faithfully with our own souls, and those whom God in his wisdom and providence has placed under our care. The day that cometh will reveal all the secret things of the heart. It will be unwise and ruinous to cover or conceal one spot or wrinkle, because those stains have existed in former times. Nor should we plead for the harmlessness of one evil or error because

our fathers were good men and they indulged therein. They lived in a darker day than we are favored with. The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now he commandeth all men everywhere to repent. May we all hear and obey the voice of the Son of God and live. May we who blow the gospel trumpet, not cause it to give an uncertain sound, lest the blood of the people be required at our hands.

GOLD TRIED IN THE FIRE.

"I counsel thee to buy of me, gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see."—REV. iii, 18.

WHEN the apocalypse was written, which is addressed to seven different churches, five of them at that early period in the history of christianity, were in a delinquent state, and the most offensive church among the delinquents was entirely unconscious of her deplorable condition. Her confident language was, "I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing." But the righteous Judge of all the earth, decided that she was "*wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*" From those solemn and alarming facts, we perceive that men and churches have been, and may again be deceived by their own treacherous hearts; hence the importance given to the Laodicean church; let us profit thereby.

First.—*The Counsel.*

1. "Buy of me gold tried in the fire." This is figurative language. The gold mentioned, no doubt means *faith*; and to buy it, we must part with all our own sins and idols. In confirmation of this conclusion, the apostle says, "That the trial of your *faith*, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried *with fire*, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter i, 7. Gold enriches its possessor, and possesses great power; so does *faith*. Gold as a coin, will pass current in every country on earth; so the proper exercise of faith will conduct us in safety through the journey of life, and procure for us a triumphant entrance into the heavenly world.

Having plainly adverted to the power of faith in my last communication, it will now be only necessary to enforce the counsel in the text, viz. "Buy gold tried in the *fire*." No man can know himself until he has been thoroughly *tried*.

It is said, that pure gold will lose nothing by an application to it, of the most intense heat; neither will genuine *faith* lose anything by the severest trial. Christ has, therefore, wisely and mercifully provided an or-

deal for the purification of our faith, viz. the cross. In the investigation of this part of our subject, it will be profitable to advert to a few characters whose gold was tested in a fiery ordeal.

First.—The case of the rich young man, who came to Christ, earnestly inquiring what he must do, to inherit eternal life, is very instructive. Jesus informs him that he must keep the law; which he declared he had done. He was moral, therefore, Jesus loved him; he was also amiable and sincere, which led him further to inquire of Christ, “What lack I yet?” Jesus replied, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.” His gold could not stand this ordeal—the dross appeared. He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Reader, if your gold was cast into the same ordeal, would there be no dross? If you were commanded to sell all you have, and give the proceeds to the poor, would you, like good, faithful Abraham, comply cheerfully and promptly?

Again.—The case of Peter affords a lesson of salutary instruction. Peter declared that he

would never deny his master; nay, he would rather meet death than be guilty of such ingratitude and infidelity; and yet in the course of a few hours afterwards, he positively denied that he knew Jesus Christ, and even confirmed it with oaths and imprecations! He repented, however, he went out and wept bitterly and was freely forgiven. May every delinquent do likewise. O how many there are, who with their lips 'in the church, or closet, or in the pious circle, confess Jesus, and when they are in the company of the wealthy and the worldly minded, by their appearance and their conversation, and trifling conduct, deny the Lord Jesus, and trample his sacred cross beneath their feet.

Turn we now with delight to the history of a few worthies, whose gold when it was tried in the fire, was found to be pure, without one particle of dross.

First.—*Abraham*, when God called and commanded him to go three days' journey, and upon a certain mountain offer up his son, his well beloved son Isaac, a burnt offering, the patriarch obeyed promptly and without any kind of equivocation; he demanded no explanation, it was God that spoke. He asked for no extenu-

ation—he knew that God would require no more of him, than he would give grace and strength to meet. Abraham concealed those heavy tidings from his beloved Sarah; he determined that no human being, nor any circumstance on earth, should prevent him from strictly discharging his duty. God's word shall be honored and obeyed, cost what it may. "Isaac, or Sarah, or my own life—all—all shall be given up freely when that God who gave those blessings shall demand them at my hand." Nor could aught on earth but the authority of that Divine Being who had ordered him thus strangely and (*apparently*) unreasonably to act, divert him from his purpose. Thus when his arm was extended, and the knife at his son's heart, God spake, and his hand, no doubt, gladly fell, and Isaac was saved! O how bright his gold then shone, and how joyful was then made his obedient, faithful heart.

Reader are you perfectly willing to give up your Isaac? to cut off and cast away that which may be as dear to you as a right hand, or a right eye, should God require it? Do you implicitly obey the voice and will of Abraham's God? When Christ says, "*Be not conformed*

to the world," its spirit, its customs, fashions, &c., do you promptly and faithfully obey? When the Lord Jesus says, "Lay not up for yourself treasure upon earth." Would you rather die than violate His sacred word? When that plain command is read in the judgment day, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors, lest they also 'bid thee again, and recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind," &c., will you be prepared to meet it with joy and confidence, saying "Lord it was done as thou commandest?" Let God's commands be more dear than life.

The three Hebrew children had their gold literally tried in the fire, because they would not bow down nor worship Nebuchednezzar's golden image. Their gold—their faith was perfectly pure. Are we sure that we do not bow to the God of this world? Do we honor and respect the poor man, as we do the rich and honorable of this world? If we are not perfectly impartial, James says, we commit sin. Do we not feel conscious, that we would rather

be independent and respected with our divine Master to be poor and despised, and doomed to bear the frowns and contumely of an ungodly world? O how many bow to the God of this world, not knowing what they do!

Once more. When Job's extensive possessions were swept away from him, he bowed his head in submission and said,—“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.” Would our gold stand this ordeal, and suffer no more loss than did Job's faith and patience? If all our goods were destroyed by wicked men, could we patiently submit and praise God for the trial of our faith? As no man can know himself until he is tried, may we be more than willing, and wisely consent to have our gold *tried* in the *fire*, that we may be indeed spiritually and eternally rich.

Secondly. “And white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.”

White is an emblem of *innocence* and *purity*. Speaking of the Bride, the Lamb's wife, John says, “and to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and *white*: for

the fine linen, is the righteousness of the saints." Rev. xix, 18. By the expression "white raiment"—"holiness of heart" is no doubt meant. Without this garment, we are as naked and as offensive in the sight of God, as our bodies would be in the eyes of man without covering.

This robe is called by our Saviour the *wedding-garment*, without which we could not be admitted to the marriage supper of the Lamb. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Heaven, with all its joys, would be more intolerable to an unholy saint than hell. If, therefore, *holiness* be a necessary qualification to an entrance into heaven, and we may die the next hour, no reasonable being can be excusable for living *carelessly* one hour without this blessing.

Holiness of heart embraces the image of God, which is *love*, and the Spirit of Christ, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, and with His expiring breath prayed for his murderers. God's word expressly assures us that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. There was no impatience, nor resentment, nor unkindness found on Christ's spotless soul; and John says, "as He (Christ) is, so are we in this world—and he that hath this hope in him purifieth him-

self even as he is pure." Nothing can be more rational, desirable, and delightful than pure love; it sweetens every bitter cup in life; it smooths all the rough paths of our fallen nature, and exhibits a pleasing emblem of heaven in the soul.

It may be well here to make an important inquiry, Do we honestly desire to possess this pearl of great price? If so, our gold well tried in the fire, will enable us to secure it *now*. When we approach a throne of grace with a *bleeding, broken* heart, and weeping eyes, evincing unequivocally that we do hunger and thirst after righteousness, then, and not till then, will the pearl be ours; then will our pure gold, unwavering faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, secure that *white garment*. "To him that believeth all things are possible." There is, however, a very great resemblance between a well executed counterfeit and one of genuine character, yet there is an immeasurable distance between the two. We must, therefore, be careful to guard against a philosophical faith, beautifully described and placed on the "altar of consecration," and that evangelical saving faith which Paul calls believing with a heart unto righteousness.

Could I give the honest inquirer after this great salvation, a practical idea of the exercise of genuine faith, I would point him to the patriarch wrestling all night with the angel of the covenant—with Almighty God; and when the angel said, “let me go for the day breaketh,” he cried out in the strong language of unwavering faith, “I will not let thee go except thou bless me.” He had power with God, and with man, and prevailed. Gold thus tried in the fire will never fail to secure that white garment of infinite value, *purity—holiness of heart*. Saul of Tarsus fasted and prayed for the space of three days and nights before he gained the important object. He overcame; he prevailed; he kept the faith even unto death, and received a crown of eternal life, as his exceeding great reward.

As a white robe is more easily soiled than one of any other color, we must be very careful and diligent by watching unto prayer always, lest after we have received through faith in Christ, that beautiful and costly garment, we should suffer it to be torn by the assaults of Satan, or soiled by the touch of a corrupt world. Our Saviour’s salutary caution must be constantly attended to, “watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation.”

The seductions of an alluring world, softened and enforced by the artful devices of Satan, are so numerous and powerful that it will require more than mortal power to save us from their fatal influence. It is well, however, that our sufficiency is not of ourselves—Christ's grace is sufficient for us; let us, therefore, wisely look for, and expect divine aid every moment.

Sin in any modification is exceedingly offensive to God, but when it is indulged in by his professed followers, it becomes most hateful in His sight. We should, therefore, dread sin, more than the sting of the poisonous adder, or even the darts of death. The eye is a very sensitive and glorious member of the body; but the immortal soul, made in the image of God, should possess a greater degree of sensibility than even the eye. Hence we should feel more acutely the influence of sin—or an idle word or an impure or an unholy thought, than the eye could experience from a wound made by the point of a needle thrust into its most tender membrane.

“Quick as the apple of an eye,
O God my conscience make!”

Satan may, and no doubt will tempt every child of God while he remains in a probation-

ary state, and by reason of our infirmities, his temptations may be difficult to resist and overcome ; yet through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *faith* in his name, and by the exercise of constant and fervent prayer we may ward off all his fiery darts, and gain a decided and elevating victory in every conflict. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able : but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Those temptations and spiritual conflicts may be necessary, and rendered very important to every christian ; hence James says, "My brethren count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations ; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience, but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Again, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation ; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." James i, 2, 3, 4, and 12. We should, therefore, stand continually upon our watch tower, and the moment we feel an assault—the slightest emotion of evil—even one discontented, or unkind feeling—an impure, or an unholy

thought, we should promptly fly for refuge and deliverance to a throne of grace, there we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need ; nor should we rest one moment until pardon is secured, and the sweet peace and love of God flows again through our purified souls. The little child who cuts his finger, the moment he sees the blood, or feels the wound, runs to his mother with tears and loud cries to have it bound up.

Were all christians to pursue this simple, but even course, it would have a most salutary effect, and without controversy or difficulty enable them to live above the atmosphere of doubt and fears—of strife and contention—they would dwell and travel in the land of Beulah where the sun never goes down. Then should they indeed be the light of a benighted world, and way-marks to the kingdom of glory. Then should their peace flow as a river, and their righteousness abound as the waves of the sea ; and God would condescend to dwell in their midst, and the whole earth would soon be brought under the benign influence of *perfect love*.

CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGE, THE GIFT OF GOD.

*“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear ;
but of power, and of love, and a sound mind.—2 TIM.
ii, 7.*

NOT only are the general principles of Christianity clearly defined in the Bible, but every landmark is particularly identified, so that he who runs may read, understand, and be saved. Man in his fallen state, is poor, and ignorant, and defiled; he must, therefore, necessarily be dependent upon the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ for all the good which he enjoys—consequently it behooves us to act with the greatest precaution and circumspection in the all-important work of our soul's salvation. Christ admonishes us to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. A wise and prudent daughter fears, and refuses to receive favors from the hand of a stranger, even complimentary language; she turns disgusted from its unhallowed influence. But from her father, she confidently and gratefully receives favors, counsel, and

even admonition, and never fails to be honored and comforted by an implicit reliance upon her father's judgment, and submission to his will. So it should be with the child of God.

Our text clearly specifies what our Heavenly Father *has*, and what He *has not given* His children.

I.—*God our Heavenly Father has not given us the spirit of FEAR.*

Cowardly, servile, guilty *fear* never fails to degrade, disgrace and ruin all those who live under its unhallowed influence. We have not received this spirit from God—“*an enemy hath done it.*”

We have not, therefore, received from God,

1. *The fear of man.*—Solomon says, “The fear of man bringeth a snare,” and one greater than Solomon has said—“Fear not them which kill the body,” &c. The child of God *fears no man*; he speaks as plainly to the *king* as he does to the beggar. The respecter of persons is virtually guilty of a violation of God's holy law, and must be damned. “By faithfully re-proving the king, John the Baptist lost his head;” but he thereby gained a martyr's crown—a most glorious exchange!

While the christian *fears* God, and keeps Him always before his eyes, acting in all things, and speaking every word to please the Lord Jesus Christ, he *fears no man*, but speaks and acts in the presence of the rich, the wise, the learned with perfect ease and independence, warning every man, and teaching every man. Though a christian would not improperly offend, or wound the feelings of the beggar or the slave, he never shrinks from responsibility, fearing the displeasure of any man.

He fears not the persecuting tongue—for he thereby gains a great reward. His divine Master has said—"Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold your reward is great in heaven." Luke vi, 22, 23. The child of God rejoices to be evil entreated, because his reward will be great in heaven. He, therefore, bears the cross of Christ fearlessly and uniformly, treading every moment in the steps of his crucified Saviour. He desires in all things, *internally* and *externally*, to be like the Lord

Jesus, therefore, he dreads to look like the children of this world, knowing that whosoever will be the *friend* of the world, is the *enemy* of God.

2. *The fear of contingencies.*—1. *Adversity.* Christ was poor, and Lazarus was poor. He knows, also, that God has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to them that love Him. He hears the sound of God's voice, denouncing the rich,—“Woe unto you that are rich.” If, therefore, he has any choice, as it regards the condition in life he is to fill, he prefers poverty to riches, choosing poverty; rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season. He fears not poverty, therefore, he can meet his Redeemer's injunction with joy—“I say unto you take no thought” (*no anxious care*) “for the morrow.” The child of God is well assured that the way of *indulgence* leads to death and ruin, and the way of self denial, to life and glory, he is, therefore, careful to deny his fallen propensities every day; like Paul he keeps his body under, and brings it into subjection; then he is oft in fasting. 2.

Affliction. David says, "It was good for me that I was afflicted." Of one greater than David it is said, He was made perfect through suffering; and Jesus says, they that suffer with me shall also reign with me. Affliction is frequently the ordeal—the furnace in which God purifies our gold, consequently the children of God can rejoice while passing through the fiery furnace, knowing that those light afflictions which are for a moment, worketh for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. They can confidently and submissively exclaim, with afflicted Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." The children of God expect soon to join that victorious company, of whom it will be said, "These are they that have come out of great tribulation,"—therefore they do not fear affliction. 3. *Death.* Death is the gate to endless joys, nor do we dread to enter there. "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We now proceed to examine,

II.—*The blessings which our Heavenly Father graciously imparts to all His children.*

God our Heavenly Father, has given us,

1. *Power*.—*Faith* now supplies the *power* which man lost in the fall. Though none but an omnipotent Being could redeem man from the iron grasp of a violated law, and impart unto him eternal life; yet this power is attributed to *faith*—Christ said to the diseased woman, “Thy *faith* hath made thee whole.” Though Christ alone is the christian’s foundation—the author and finisher of our redemption—yet is *faith* uniformly considered as the instrumental cause of our salvation. “If ye have *faith* as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.” Matt. xvii, 20. *Faith* gives us *power with God*. Jacob, after wrestling all night with the angel of the covenant, cried out in the energetic language of *faith*—“I will not let thee go until thou bless me.” The angel replied, “As a prince hast thou *power with God*, and with men, and hast prevailed.” It is true, christians are compared to little children, yet has the helpless infant, *power* to control the parent at any time, the piteous cry of the babe will call to its relief the parent’s hand of sympathy and affection at the midnight hour.

Thus, when the helpless child of God cries to his heavenly father for aid, the Lord Jesus is touched with the feeling of his infirmities, which moves the hands, which made the world, and calls the mighty God of Jacob to his instant and unlimited relief. “*Ask and ye shall receive.*”

God’s children under the law, the *faithful* Israelites, exercised extraordinary *power*, and thereby honored their Maker, and confounded the heathen world. Paul in adverting to the character of those worthies, remarked—“And what more shall I say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Sampson and of Jephthae, and of David, also, and of Samuel, and of the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured,[¶] not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.” Heb. xi, 32—35. If God gave his faithful servants who lived in the legal dispensation, extraordi-

nary and honorable power, will He refuse to grant His children under the benign influence of the gospel, equal or even greater power? The Apostle says, "For if that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." 2 Cor. iii, 2. Whether, therefore, we claim it, or not, it is the christian's prerogative to possess *power* with God. "To him that believeth, all things are possible."

1. *Power over the devil.*—"Resist the devil and he will flee from thee." Satan is now a conquered enemy, and can exert no positive power over the children of God, since Christ has redeemed them and taken them from under the curse of the law, and placed them under the benign influence of grace. The devil can now only exert his power through the medium of deception and temptation. Hence our Saviour's salutary injunction, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Paul says, "We are not ignorant of his devices." While the christian walks in the light, watching over every rising desire of his heart, and carefully avoids the wide way—the way of self *indulgence*, and walks diligently in the King's highway of *holiness*, looking momentarily unto Jesus for

grace and wisdom to guide and direct all his steps, he will walk securely, and have *power over the devil*.

3. *Power over the world*.—Satan now uses this world as a snare to allure and destroy immortal souls. He spread his net for our Saviour's feet, when he presented to his view all the kingdoms of this world, and said, "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou, therefore, will worship me, all shall be thine." And the grand adversary of God and man, still uses the same bait, to allure and deceive poor mortals; but the children of God meet his wily suggestions as did the Lord Jesus—"get thee behind me Satan." The most feeble child of God, spurns from his presence all the glories of this world—all its beautiful objects—rich and delicious food—together with its honors and titles of distinction. Hence, he will not consent to be called Rabbi, Rabbi; no, nor Rev.—Right Rev., much less D. D. He neither seeks nor desires the honor of men, but the honor which cometh from God only. He is, therefore, as willing to be hissed at as to be applauded. He daily bears the

cross of Christ, and triumphantly exclaims with the Apostle to the Gentiles—"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

4. *Power over self.*—Self is perhaps the most potent enemy we shall have to meet on the christian's battle ground. It imperceptibly intertwines itself into all our actions, words, desires and motives. If we, however, honestly unmask this enemy and exhibit him in his true colors, he wears a most despicable visage. A *selfish father* who disregards the wants and comforts of his children, if his own comforts are supplied, would be held up to universal contempt. A selfish husband would be still more despicable; while the noble and disinterested man, who would risk, or even lose his life, to save or benefit his fellow mortal, would be universally esteemed and admired.

The dark principle of selfishness, if it exists in its mildest forms in our heart, will appear far more despicable in the day of eternity, when the secrets of all hearts shall be made known, than it does here when viewed in its most deformed features. Hence, the importance that

self should be *crucified*. The idol *self* must be slain; therefore, every prudent child of God, elevates Christ and sinks himself. He dreads the smiles, and applause of men, and feels willing, with Paul, to be counted as the filth and off-scouring of the world, rather than have his name honored by the admiring breath of dying mortals. The child of God has *power over self*.

2. *Love*.—Pure undefiled *love*. The child of God bears his Heavenly Father's image, viz. *love*—he loves with sincere sympathy, and ardent affection, his greatest enemy. He never reviles, however much he may be reviled and injured, but like his Lord and Master, he prays for his worst enemies. He knows that Christ's spirit is a spirit of pure *love*, and if he does not possess Christ's spirit, or striving hard by fasting and prayer to gain it, he is neither a child nor a servant of Christ. When the christian's heart is filled with *love*, it excludes every unholy principle; no envy, no resentment, no emulation, no unkind or sour feeling can commingle with the pure, sweet stream of *love*. The same fountain does not afford fresh, and occasionally salt water; neither can the fig tree bear olive berries. God the Father, therefore, gives all his

children a spirit of *pure love*—the pure Spirit of Jesus Christ, which assimilates them to God, and alone can qualify them for heaven.

3. *A sound mind*.—God, not only gives all his children, *power and love*, but *wisdom*. This precious *jewel*, more valuable by far than fine gold, our Heavenly Father gives to all his children freely. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” James i, 5.

Here, however, we must be very cautious that we do not receive counterfeit coin. Paul says, “the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God.” We must be careful in the examination of this precious treasure, the fine gold of the sanctuary, that it is not mixed with alloy. There is a most striking resemblance between a well executed counterfeit and a genuine bank note, yet are they as dissimilar as day and night, as virtue and vice. No two things on earth, are in reality more unlike each other, and yet frequently the most experienced judge is unable to detect the fraud. The inspired writer, however, has given us a plain description of the spurious, and of the genuine coin, by which we may

be enabled to judge correctly, and avoid deception. "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness and wisdom. But if ye have envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual and devilish. For where *envying* and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and hypocrisy." James iii, 13—17. We learn from the above rule that where there is bitter envying and strife, the gold is not genuine. Those dark traits are too often seen in modern days, in the several branches of Christ's church; do they not place the mark of reprobation on every heart where they are found to exist? When we seek for happiness in any earthly object, such as gold, silver, property, food and raiment, &c., we become irrational and *sensual*, and are thus imperceptibly transferred into the image of the devil, the very essence of whose character is *deception*. Those dark traits of character are

further developed by a desire to occupy the highest seats in the synagogue, and to be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi, desiring to be something when they are nothing; thus not only deceiving others, but their own souls—deceiving and being deceived. But the wisdom which characterizes the children of God, and cometh from above, is *pure, peaceable, gentle*, easy to be entreated, full of *mercy and good fruits*, without *partiality*, and without *hypocrisy*. The christian considers every human being as his Father's child, and treats the poor beggar (of moral character) with as much respect and affection, as he feels for the more wealthy and honorable members of society. If he becomes a respecter of persons, he violates God's *holy law of love*, and must be excluded from heaven. The child of God is also free from *hypocrisy*. While he is poor, he does not assume the appearance of the rich man, but dresses, and strives to appear to others just what he is—as willing that every beholder should see his heart, as his face. How striking the contrast between the wisdom of this world, and that which cometh from God; and how pleasing and encouraging the reflection, that true wisdom though indescribably lovely and desirable, and

placed above price, is by our Heavenly Father *given* freely to all His children without money and without price. This is the wedding garment, the robe in which the redeemed will appear at the marriage of the Lamb. God's children have "*a sound mind.*"

CHRISTIAN WARFARE.

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds. 2 CoR. x, 4.

WE find ourselves placed in a world of conflict, and of danger, surrounded by a mighty host of enemies. Good and evil—virtue and vice, are irreconcilable enemies. If we secure any earthly good, we have to fight for it. It requires labor, and care, and diligence to gain the necessary comforts of food and raiment; to insure success, we have to wage war with animate and inanimate nature. After we have toiled to prepare the ground, and have deposited the seed therein, both wild and domestic animals will array themselves in hostility against the labor of our hands; hence we have to close the ground to guard against their incursions—the birds of the air, the crawling reptiles of the earth will endeavor to destroy the good seed. Thus every article of real value which grows out of the earth, is surrounded by enemies,

while the weeds and briars grow spontaneously without care or culture! Not only has the earth been cursed on account of man's sin, but the atmosphere is full of deadly poison. The human heart in a very especial manner is exposed to the assaults of deadly foes. The devil goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour; he also assumes the form of a serpent, and transforms himself into the appearance of an angel of light, the more effectually to destroy poor, frail mortals. And further, to increase our danger and call forth our energies in life's conflict, we have to meet and conquer enemies in our own bosom—our degenerate heart. Our passions and our appetites are our deadly foes. Indulge children in all their desires, and they will be invariably and inevitably ruined—men are but children of a larger growth. Thus in our present fallen condition, we must fight or fall—conquer or be ruined forever. There can be no neutrals in this war. Therefore in the improvement of our present subject, we will,

1. ADVERT TO THE CHARACTER OF OUR INVETERATE ENEMY, (THE DEVIL,) AND EXPOSE TO VIEW A FEW OF HIS "STRONGHOLDS."

1. His character.—He is an active, restless foe—he goeth about like a roaring lion. A malicious enemy, hence he is called Satan. An artful, deceptious foe, his strength now lieth in his cunning—his artifice—his deceptions. Paul says, we are not ignorant of his devices. It will, therefore, be necessary that we have not only the wisdom that cometh from above, but divine power also to enable us to meet and conquer this artful, insidious enemy.

2. His strongholds.—As the devil has been foiled and conquered by the Lord Jesus Christ, his hope of success now depends not only on his devices, but he erects entrenchments and fortifications to aid him in his work of destruction. On the present occasion we will only notice three of his strongholds, viz. Infidelity—Pride—Love of the World.

First stronghold—INFIDELITY.—The devil can now gain very little by an avowal of open infidelity. Learned and pious men of God, by writing and preaching, have well nigh demolished this stronghold of Satan; there are now very few open and avowed infidels—their theory will not bear the light.

This artful seducer however, has covertly

gathered up the fragments of this favorite fortification, and while by his crafty devices, he denounces infidelity, and even his open friends are unwilling to appear entrenched within its tottering walls, he transposes the name, and enters the church, where he carries on his work of ruin and infidelity under cover of Christianity. Hence, upon a close examination, it will be found that many professors of religion, both in the ministry and the membership, are only specious infidels ! Alas—what a multitude of professing christians are living at ease in Zion—are slumbering in a lukewarm state ; nor do they believe Christ's solemn declaration, when He says, He will spew them out of his mouth. All those who are living carelessly—viz. without fasting, and diligent, persevering prayer, that they may be purified and made holy now, not to-morrow, do not believe that sin is hateful to God, and must exclude us from heaven. Again, there are many professors who do not really believe in the existence of the attributes of God—1st. His omnipresence—"Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord Almighty." But who really believes it ? No man that says, or does any thing which he would not say or do, if the

Lord Jesus were personally present. But who, may we not ask, uniformly observes this rule? 2nd. God's omniscience. Who really and consistently believes in the existence of this attribute? No man who wishes to conceal from man, his actions, thoughts, motives, and desires. Surely if he is ashamed of those secret things before men, he should feel infinitely more ashamed to disclose them to the view of a pure and holy God. May we not find infidels? viz. unbelievers in the bosom of the church. Again there are many who would feel insulted were you to call them infidels or unbelievers, and yet they do not believe God's holy word!

If there is one declaration in the holy bible which I do not believe, I may as well disbelieve every word written therein. The word of God says—this night thy soul may be required of thee, and without holiness no man can see the Lord; if therefore, I am not in possession of that pearl of great price, or striving with all my ransomed powers to secure it, I either do not believe God's word, or I place a very low estimate upon the value of my soul. In God's word it is written—"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which

the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter iii, 10. That awful day will come as a thief in the night—in an unexpected hour. Do we believe this solemn declaration? All of us who are living unprepared to die, viz. in an unholy, an unsanctified state, without making every exertion in our power to realize a pure heart, do not really believe it. To prove this fact, let us suppose a case—a stranger informs us that an incendiary will burn down our house one night next week, he heard the plan arranged for doing this dreadful deed; would we during that week retire to bed without making a judicious preparation to guard against the impending calamity? We feel conscious that we would not; and yet when Almighty God speaks, and unequivocally declares that He may burn up the world this night, and under those solemn circumstances, we retire to our slumbering bed with an entire indifference, conscious that we are not prepared to meet our God. Now if we regard the word of man, more than the word of God, can we meet the Judge of all the earth with joy? We believed our

neighbor, and we promptly acted, God speaks, and we disregard His word. Are we not therefore virtually unbelievers—infidels? This species of infidelity forms a favored position, a stronghold for the devil.

2. PRIDE. The pride of the heart, forms a most pleasing lurking place for Satan. God hates a proud look, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased. In the arms of our infidelity Satan feels himself secure, for God has said, “he that believeth not shall be damned,” but the devil revels and takes peculiar delight in the heart where pride is countenanced. A proud beggar would be truly a contemptible character; and the devil knows we are all beggars, dependent on God for every drop of water, and every crumb of bread. A poor culprit condemned to be executed to-morrow and inflated with pride, would present a most despicable sight in the eyes of reflecting men. All mankind are condemned to die, and may meet their solemn doom the next moment. As pride in its nature is unnatural, unreasonable, hateful to God, and destructive to human happiness, it behooves us to examine our hearts with great care, and candor, lest a particle of this soul-degrading, God-

dishonoring principle in which Satan delights, should be found to exist within. A desire to be seen and admired of men, is unequivocal proof of the existence of this evil in the heart. Can anything but pride influence a dying, condemned mortal to wear fine and costly apparel, or build elegant and expensive houses, and furnish them with costly furniture only to be seen and admired? It is, however, frequently asserted that we may be as proud when dressed in osnaburgs, as in broadcloth. While the possibility of this supposition is admitted, the subject involved in the case is of too much importance (even the loss of the soul) to pass over the argument carelessly. We must appeal to higher authority than poor, erring men; we must hear what Almighty God says in regard to this important subject:

When Ahab laid aside his royal robes, and put on sackcloth (a coarse hairy garment) and fasted, the Lord beheld it, and said to Elijah: "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me, I will not bring this evil in his days." Our Saviour's words are in perfect accordance with the above declaration. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the

mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." Matt. xi, 21.

When Almighty God expressly declared that sackcloth, a coarse, hairy garment, worn by a man, was a mark of humility, will mortal men say, that to wear gay and costly apparel is no evidence of pride in the heart! Let God be true, though every mortal man be found guilty of falsehood. Therefore, prudence and common sense dictates to us that we should imitate the conduct of Ahab, and also of the Ninevites, by laying aside every mark of wealth and show in our houses, our furniture, and our apparel, especially as our blessed Redeemer laid aside his exalted glory, and bore the cross, and despised the shame, being born in a stable, and having marked the pathway to heaven, in and through the deep valley of humility and self-denial! O let us imitate the example of our Lord Jesus Christ in this great conflict. May we, like our Lord and Master, be clothed with the beautiful garment of genuine humility, and thus drive Satan from his favorite haunt of pride in our heart.

3dly. LOVE OF THE WORLD.—When the

devil has been driven from his haunts of infidelity and pride, he retires, as his last subterfuge, into the stronghold of the love of the world. Here he generally makes his most powerful and successful attacks upon the heart of man. Satan well knows that the love of the world, is the darkest crime a human being can be guilty of—the most malignant and fatal disease to which, he is exposed in this unhealthy clime. It was the only disease the Great Physician failed to cure when he was on earth. When the rich young man was directed by the Lord Jesus to sell all his possessions and give the proceeds to the poor, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. O how powerfully and successfully did the devil fight for this impregnable fortress erected in this amiable young man's heart! And to the present day this stronghold is Satan's favorite rendezvous.

Let us therefore examine this point with care and candor. Were we called on to sell all our earthly possessions, and give the proceeds to the poor, could we promptly and cheerfully comply with the requisition? Or would we not rather go away, like the rich young man, from Christ, with a sorrowful heart? If so, would it

not afford proof positive that we LOVE THE WORLD, and thereby afford the devil a most desirable stronghold in our heart.

Again, were we only tried as was the old patriarch, who lived in a very dark age of the world, could we meet the trial and triumph as did Job? When all his large possessions were swept away, he bowed in submission and praised the Lord! Satan well knows that if we love the world, its money, its property, its honors, its gratifications, more or less, we cannot love God, and must be banished forever from His presence, and the glory of His power. There are many who deceive their own souls by saying—"I love God better than I love the world." Were the wife to use this specious argument and comfort her husband, by assuring him she loves him better than the other favorite, it would be mockery; and yet many who pass for good Christians, will cast this dark reproach upon the Saviour, and wipe their lips and say, "I have done no wrong." Others console their own hearts by saying, "It is true I am not yet sanctified wholly, I still feel the remains of the carnal mind, but I intend and expect to secure the wedding garment, viz. pure love before I

die." Was the wife to adopt this language, and comfort her husband by assuring him that it was her sincere desire and intention to love him perfectly before she died, when she became old and wrinkled, it would be an insult which human language cannot describe, and yet professing Christians will carelessly assume this ruinous position in regard to the Holy One of Israel, and sit down contentedly and smoke and laugh and jest, and murder their precious moments, which should be spent in fasting and prayer. Hence the love of the world may be considered Satan's most favorite lurking place, his principal stronghold, the last from which he will be driven.

Having briefly and imperfectly examined some of the devil's strongholds, proceed we,

SECONDLY—To notice the nature of the conflict, and the means through which we may gain a triumphant victory.

1. The nature of the conflict. It is a spiritual warfare, hence the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, &c. It is a good cause; "Fight the good fight of faith." It is an incessant conflict. If we are only one minute off our guard, the insidious enemy will take advantage of that

careless moment to inflict a deadly wound. It is an important battle, if we are conquered, eternal ruin must ensue, including shame and ceaseless misery. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment—Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." Matt. xxv, 46; 2 Thess. i, 9. If we are courageous and gain the victory—eternal life shall be our great reward, including an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not away. A home—a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens, and to crown the victor's head, a glorious crown of life shall be given. It is enough—it is an important conflict in which we are engaged.

2. The PREPARATION for BATTLE—the CHRISTIAN ARMOR. "THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE."

The ancients used both offensive and defensive armor, and as our foes are numerous, insidious and malignant, and we shall have to fight at every step through life, for liberty, and all our gospel privileges, it will be important and necessary that we put on the whole armor of God. As cowardice invariably marks the sol-

dier's character with shame and disgrace, all slavish fear must be laid aside.

The apostle to the Gentiles, has given us a full description of the Christian soldier's armor. Eph. vi, 13—18. (1.) "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with the TRUTH." God's word is truth. The girdle for our loins must be composed of scripture doctrine. If our doctrine is defective or not true, when the discovery is made, it will weaken our loins, and cause our knees to smite together. It behooves us, therefore, to receive and preach that doctrine which will stand on the judgment day, viz. the proper divinity of Jesus Christ, that by his death, he made an atonement for us—that by repentance and faith, only, we may receive pardon, regeneration, and sanctification; and that through faith in Jesus Christ, we may live holy, righteous and godly lives on earth, and enjoy eternal life in heaven. He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

2d. THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. Nothing but this breastplate can protect our vital parts from the assaults of our enemies. Our hearts must be made perfect, and right, and

pure, and good, by the mighty power of that God who has done all things well, whose signature is purity and perfection. We must keep this important piece of armor bright by faith and prayer. May our righteousness never become dim or rusty.

3d. YOUR FEET SHOD WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE." We must expect to meet with briers and thorns in our pathway to heaven. We shall be assailed frequently by persecution and sore temptation, piercing our feet most painfully. Our feet, therefore, must be shod with peace. A pure spirit of peace and love in connection with a pure heart, will enable us to trample all the briers and thorns beneath our feet, not only those which proceed from the mouth of bitter and enraged men, but also devils. God will shortly bruise Satan under your feet. Let us, therefore, put on the gospel shoes of peace—peace and love.

4th. "THE SHIELD OF FAITH." A defensive piece of armor used by the ancients, sometimes made of metal, but more frequently of tanned hides that were anointed with oil, in order to render them smooth, compact and firm. Faith is the Christian soldier's shield, which if dexter-

ously managed, will successfully ward off all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Infidelity—unbelief constitutes Satan's most successful stronghold, but faith, strong faith, demolishes that fortification at a blow, and leaves the enemy exposed to the triumphant assaults of humble, fervent prayer. All things are possible to him that believeth. We should, therefore, always keep the shield of faith in active exercise. The Christian is never safe, no not for one moment, without the shield of faith. Paul says, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." So that every step through life should be regulated by the rule of faith. "Whatever is not of faith is sin," so that whatever we do or say, should be done and said to the glory of God.

5th. "THE HELMET OF SALVATION." God is my salvation, therefore, I will not fear what men can do unto me. The saving power, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ should always rest upon the Christian soldier's head; add to this, "THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT," "which is the word of God." This is our two-edged sword, its promises foil our enemies, and crowns us with peace and safety; its commands, denunciations, and inflexible justice, conquers and

slays every assailant. O let us wield this sharp sword dexterously, and wisely, and certain victory wil ensue. We must not fail, however, to accompany all our efforts with prayer, humble fervent prayer. It is not the soldier, but the Captain who gains the victory in all our battles; hence we must implore and secure the presence and aid of the Lord Jesus Christ in every conflict. In our prayers we must be careful to avoid formality, they must be accompanied with, and enforced by supplication in the Spirit. We must strive, fight, press our cause upon our knees, we must pray without ceasing. And yet farther, we must watch as well as pray, "Watching thereunto with all perseverance." We must watch every motion of the enemy, either from without or from within, watch diligently every thought, every word, every desire, every motive and every action.

By a judicious application of the Christian armor, we shall learn that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of all Satan's strongholds. Thus through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we may gain and secure a glorious, a triumphant victory over all our enemies,

and enter through the gates triumphantly into the New Jerusalem, the Holy City of God, to go no more out forever, where we shall lay the weapons of our warfare by, where eternal peace shall be proclaimed to all Christ's faithful, valiant soldiers. Amen.

WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMETH
SHALL HE FIND FAITH ON
THE EARTH.

“Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth.”—LUKE xviii, 8.

THE evidence that there is a God, and that He hears the cry of His dependent children on earth, and supplies all their wants, is as conclusive to the eye of faith, as the father's hand, or the judge's authority is seen, felt and realized daily in the different occurrences of life, by our physical senses; yet our Saviour more than intimates that when he comes again, he will not find faith on the earth. We presume He means *strong, living, consistent faith*. We will consider:

First.—The supposed condition of the world when the Son of Man shall come; viz. without *living, strong, consistent faith*.

1. *The power or life of faith*.—Faith now supplies the strength which man lost in the fall. Under the legal economy, or Mosaic dispensation, faith possessed almost an unlimited power.

Jacob by the strong arm of faith, held the angel, and would not let him go. Hence, the angel said, "For as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed." The Apostle in adverting to the character of a host of ancient worthies, says, "Who through *faith* subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword; out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens; women received their dead bodies raised to life again," &c. Those mighty and miraculous deeds were performed by the exercise of *faith* in God, through the grace of a promised Messiah. Nor can we rationally suppose that this divine principle would lose its power and efficacy under the sacred influence of the gospel. In contrasting the legal and evangelical dispensations, the Apostle says, "For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." 2 Cor. iii, 9. Our Saviour in describing the *faith* of the gospel day, says, "For verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall

say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Matt. xvii, 20. Again, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Mark ix, 23. And when the Lord Jesus commissioned His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel, He added, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." And as a security against Antinomian and Universalian corruptions, He guards the principle of saving faith by an important declaration, viz. "And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; and they shall lay hands upon the sick, and they shall recover." Mark xvi, 17, 18.

It is now believed, however, that this power was only imparted to the Apostles, and was taken from the church soon after their day. Is there any scripture proof of this fact? I know not one text that will prove it even by implication. If those signs were only to attend and

confirm the preaching of the Apostles, why were they written in that holy book without any reserve, all of which we are bound to obey? Those signs are inseparably connected with *our* commission. If we are sent to preach the gospel, we must receive our authority from Christ, and in Matthew's gospel, He adds these words, "And lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This gracious promise is not applicable to the Apostles exclusively, but unequivocally to His ministers in all ages, even to the end of the world; nor is there any intimation in God's word that the *power* of faith was ever to be taken from the church; and yet it has ceased to be exercised; nay, it has been voluntarily and formally given up and excluded from every branch of the Protestant church; and if it cannot now be found in the church, we presume it cannot be found on earth. It is said, however, that there is *now* no need for extraordinary faith, since the gospel has been established in the world. Even this apology I fear is very unsound, for to the present day, more than one-half of the inhabitants of the earth, have not received the gospel, neither have they heard that Jesus Christ, the eternal

Son of God, is the only Saviour of our ruined race. If our missionaries possessed this power of faith, how different would be their success in heathen lands.

Nor is it reasonable, nor would God deal impartially with all men, were he to give irresistible and conclusive proof of the divinity of the gospel to the few, and leave the many without such evidence.

Again. Is there no necessity that the servant of God should possess power to heal that poor lunatic, whose maladies lie beyond the reach of medical skill or power? Is it not greatly to be feared that we have sat down on the lap of Delilah (the god of this world, ease and wealth,) where our locks have been shorn off, and we have become weak and feeble as other men? And by way of quieting our conscience, we say there is *now* no necessity for extraordinary *faith*!

But leaving this important, this vital principle of faith, which cannot now be found on earth, let us inquire further. Can we *now* find another very important feature of faith, viz. an unwavering and consistent belief, or faith in the attributes of God? say His omnipresence.

Where can we find that faith which uniformly realizes that great truth, "Thou God seest me?" Who believes that God hears every word he speaks, and that he is constantly in his immediate presence? Where shall we find that individual, who says or does nothing which he would not say and do if the Lord Jesus were personally present? Can he be found on earth? We may hope, but alas! our fears rise above our hopes.

Further, where shall we find the man who fully and consistently believes God's holy word? We must believe all that is written in God's book, or it will profit us nothing. Who really and constantly believes the following declaration? "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter iii, 10. As that momentous day will come as a thief in the night, we should expect it this night—the next hour, but who does? Alas! how few there are who live and act as if they were even willing to see the Lord Jesus come. Had even a stranger have

informed us that a band of incendiaries would burn down our house one night during the next week, what a deep impression it would have made on our mind; it would drive peace and sleep far away, unless we were well prepared to meet the event, but when God speaks, and makes a more awful declaration, we feel but little concerned about the event; perhaps we retire to our bed unprepared to meet that solemn doom which will come on us as a thief, and may come this night.

The Apostle says, "For we walk by *faith*, not by sight," and "whatever is not of faith, is sin." 2 Cor. v, 7; Rom. xiv, 23. Thus every act of our life, should be an act of faith, believing confidently that it will please God. "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. x, 31. O how few there are now on earth who live by faith; who regard not the opinion of men; neither their own secular interest, but believe confidently that what they say and do will please the Lord Jesus Christ, and benefit the human family! All these things, living—consistent faith fully realizes. But can we find its existence on earth?

Secondly.—The coming of the Son of Man.

We may inquire into the *design*, the *manner* and the *time of His coming*.

1st. *The design.*—It is presumable that the great object of Christ's second coming, will be to establish His kingdom on earth in peace, and truth; when individual and universal righteousness shall obtain. Then, and not until then, will God's will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

In that happy day, all mankind shall dwell together as one great family of God on earth; nor will there be one discordant sound or sentiment heard among men, any more than those sounds are heard among the multitudes in heaven. The Lord Jesus taught His disciples and followers to pray for this glorious era, by using that comprehensive petition, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven." Our faith, however, has been very weak, and our work (in regard to doing God's will as it is done in heaven) has been even more defective. Hence, we have ceased ardently to desire the consummation of Christ's great work of redemption, either in our own souls, unless it should be effected near the close of life, on the brink

of the grave. And its universal effect, we have placed far, far away, even at some remote period of the world's history, which we are quite willing shall not be in our day.

The prophets have spoken in the most elevated and glowing strains in regard to the Messiah's kingdom and reign on earth; when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more, but their swords shall be beat into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks. When the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and nothing shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain.

In the New Testament, Christ's coming and kingdom is spoken of in exalted terms—"For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels; and then shall He reward every man according to his works." Matt. xvi, 27. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." Col. iii, 4. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. ix, 28. Texts might be multiplied in regard to this

subject; I will add but one more. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. xi, 15.

2d.—*The manner of His coming.*

As He went into heaven, so will He come in like manner again; so said the angels to the astonished disciples. "And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them, in white apparel; which also said, ye men of Gallilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts i, 10, 11. All consistent christians, believe that Christ ascended up into heaven, in the same body in which he appeared to His disciples at different times after His resurrection. Therefore, it is fairly presumable that He will come personally. Again. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen." Rev. i, 7.

The objector may say that Christ cannot come personally, as in that case He could not be omnipresent—that every eye could not behold him on earth if He were confined to a physical location. These difficulties exist not with an omnipotent God. Nor should we limit the Holy One of Israel in this day of wonderful—almost miraculous light. Fallible, ignorant men, can now regulate and control the magnetic fluid so perfectly and mysteriously, that distance is almost annihilated, and those who are separated by hundreds and thousands of miles, can converse together !

It is not, however, important that we should either know, or be able to define the *manner* of Christ's coming, it is enough for us to know that He will come; the manner we leave to a God of infinite wisdom and omnipotent power.

3d. *The time*.—Man should not presume to be wise above that which is written. Secret things belong to God, and those which are revealed, to us and our children. As God has wisely and mercifully concealed from man the day of his dissolution, so has He seen good to conceal from us the time of His coming. Christ has plainly informed us that it will be as

a thief in the night—at an unexpected hour. Therefore, every prudent individual should look for, and expect that glorious event, every day, every hour; nor presume or dare to live one day, or one hour unprepared to meet the Lord Jesus with joy at His coming. Who of us would rejoice, to see Christ make His glorious appearance now—this moment? To all such I would say, be of good cheer, the night is far spent, the glorious morning is at hand, when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise to set no more.

The present state of the world, and of the church, indicate the immediate appearance of Christ as conclusively as the budding of the trees bespeak the opening spring, and the return of summer; those signs, and the fearful representations given of that day, should alarm us all, and cause us to live momentarily prepared for that great event. The Lord Jesus gives us the following salutary caution, in regard to that day: “And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all

them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Luke xxi, 34, 35.

Again.—“Likewise also as in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be, when the Son of Man is revealed.” Luke xvii, 28—30.

With these solemn and alarming declarations continually sounding in our ears, can we live carelessly one moment, without a *pure* and *holy* heart; and perhaps contending earnestly about meats and drinks—about forms and ceremonies? Nay, should we not rather fast and pray, day and night, until our hearts are purified by the precious blood of Jesus—until we can stand by *faith*, continually before God, unblamable and unrebukable in His sight? Amen. Lord awake a guilty world; and a slumbering church to a sense of our imminent danger.

LEARNING AND LEARNED INSTITUTIONS.

I NOW approach a subject of vital importance to the church ; and I am fully aware that in the expression of my sentiments in regard to it, I shall stand far—very far in the minority. Few, very few, particularly in the ministry, will consider my sentiments either orthodox or reasonable. If, however, I can have God's word and reason's voice with me, I shall have nothing to fear. Noah stood almost alone in his day. Lot found very few who were willing to go with him when he fled from a devoted city. The Lord Jesus and his little band of followers were very far in the minority, but they were not cast down. I will, therefore, take courage—put my trust alone in Israel's God, and venture to show my opinion also.

My remarks in this place will be confined to the subject of learning and learned institutions in connection with the church. I do not intend to undervalue knowledge or human learning—I do not believe the unsound and enthusi-

astic doctrine that "ignorance is the mother of devotion." It will, however, be admitted by every unprejudiced mind, either in, or out of the church, that good things, nay, the best things on earth, may be abused and misplaced, and thus become curses rather than blessings; even literary institutions, when they are found out of their legitimate place, may induce discord rather than harmony. I assume the position that colleges and literary institutions belong to the world's department, and not to the church. The Lord Jesus says of his followers, who constitute the church—Ye are not of the world, I have chosen you out of the world, marvel not, therefore, that the world hate you. MONEY has been called the mammon of unrighteousness—THE GOD OF THIS WORLD; and one reason why it is so called, is on account of the power it possesses, and the homage generally paid to those who have it in their possession. Learning, (by which I mean a finished collegiate education,) has still greater power. The rich man may oppress the poor, and cause his power to be felt in divers ways; yet were he an ignorant man, he would be looked on by men of refinement with pity and contempt; but an accomplished

education will procure for its possessor an honorable reception in kings' courts, and secure to him (if he is an upright man) the friendship and admiration of the distinguished men of the world universally. In ordinary cases neither the rich, nor the learned and wise men, will willingly bow to the CROSS of Jesus Christ, or treat those who consistently bear it, with common respect; should they be members or ministers of the church, when they speak on the subject of the cross, they confine all the pain, and shame, and reproach connected therewith to Jesus Christ exclusively, nor will they touch it with one of their fingers. Paul gloried in the cross of Christ, not only in theory or imagination, but in reality; by it he was crucified unto the world, viz. he was exposed to nakedness, and buffeting, and persecutions; and was counted as the filth and offscouring of all things—in these he gloried; but generally our learned and wise men will beg to be excused from such exultation. I know there are, and have been, in every age of the world, honorable exceptions to this general rule. When the circumstances of the church require the aid of human learning, God can call a Moses from the king's court, or a Saul of Tar-

sus from the feet of Gamaliel, and when they are powerfully convicted and converted to God, they will choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season—they will esteem the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; their language will be, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him not having on mine own righteousness which is of the law,” &c.

In modern times there have been many burning and shining lights in the church, who were men of extensive learning, as they were also of deep piety. The Wesleys and Fletcher, and others connected with them, shone as flaming heralds of the cross, and were abundantly successful under the influence of divine grace, in reforming and purifying the church, and also a wicked world. It was not, however, necessary, nor agreeable to the order of the divine economy that all who preached the gospel should be learned men in that day; the greater part of the labor, even of preaching, was performed by un-

learned men. Especially was the implanation, and the triumphant progress of Methodism, or pure and undefiled religion, in these United States effected principally by unlearned men. And at the commencement of the gospel of Jesus Christ on earth, the principal part of the labor and efficient work, was performed by ignorant and unlearned men. Now, is it reasonable to suppose that the Lord Jesus when he laid the corner stone of his church on earth, could make a mistake, or set an example which his followers in all after ages could not pursue with safety and success? Jesus Christ could have called in to his aid the learned and wise men of his day, but he chose in his wisdom to act otherwise, he called his disciples generally from the lower walks of life—from the fishing net, &c. If there ever was a time or circumstances that called for human learning, it was at the commencement of the gospel dispensation, when an error in doctrine, or in experience, or in practice, would have been attended with the most pernicious, if not ruinous consequences. It may be said that the apostles acted under the immediate influence and inspiration of the Holy Ghost. True, and who can prove by the word of God, that the in-

fluence of the Holy Spirit has ever been (by divine appointment) withdrawn from Christ's church and his ministering servants? If (as it is believed by many) the gospel and the grace of God shines brighter when it emanates from men of learning, than when it is preached by unlearned men, why did not Christ select all his apostles from the learned circle? Surely wisdom and prudence would unequivocally dictate that course, as the best which could be considered greatly preferable at a later period in the history of the church.

If, therefore, the church of Christ was originally built up principally by unlearned men; and when God greatly revived the cause of pure religion in the earth, and visited his people in great power in the eighteenth century through the instrumentality of J. Wesley and others, the work was effected principally by unlearned men, is it reasonable to suppose that it must now be perpetuated, and secured from error only by human learning? Learning has not a tendency to harmonize and unite the church of Christ, or to dissipate the clouds and difficulties which seem to rest on many parts of God's written word; on the contrary, extensive and ruinous

discord has been introduced into the bosom of the church by learned and pious men. The doctrine of election and reprobation, which has filled the Protestant churches with bitterness and discord, and still continues to becloud the glory of the Sun of Righteousness in many parts of the Lord's vineyard—even this unreasonable theory emanated from a man of talent, and learning, who is also represented to have sustained a good and pious character. Although this extraordinary system of divinity, has been ably, and I think conclusively refuted by many learned and pious authors; and never was it made to feel its own weakness and deformity as sensibly as it was under the ministry of the early, but unlearned Methodist preachers, who assailed it with the powerful weapons of truth and reason, under the omnipotent influence of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; yet it is still believed and advocated by many learned and wise, and professedly pious ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of the advocates of the numerous and conflicting creeds which abound in the present day, are learned, and wise, and good men; yet they inflexibly adhere to the doctrine which has been installed into

their minds by the force of education; and their prejudices are generally, if not uniformly strengthened and confirmed by the power of their superior learning, which enables them to fortify and defend their errors by learned and specious arguments. It may, therefore, be said, without fear of successful contradiction, that learning does not particularly qualify ministers to enforce the plain, simple, experimental and practical truths of the gospel, as efficiently as it does to defend their own peculiar views and tenets, and to explore what they esteem the errors of others. Hence a perpetual war is kept up by learned divines, not so much in support of truth and righteousness, as to establish and confirm their own peculiar sentiments. When young men are educated with a view to the ministry, they naturally conclude that as they know more than others, they must be better; consequently they frequently, and almost uniformly assume an air of importance, altogether incompatible with the holy religion of their meek and lowly Redeemer. Nor does this unholy leaven exist in a latent state; they soon begin to think that their talents and intellectual advantages entitle them to a higher seat in the syna-

gogue than their unlearned but pious brother. Hence a train of evils are engendered in their own bosom, which soon diffuses its influence among others, and contaminates the house of God with pride and dissension, where nothing but humility, contentment and love should exist. Our learned young men soon become critics, and esteem a grammatical error made by a preacher, a sufficient crime to expel the ignoramus from the ministry. Many old veterans of the cross, who have borne the burden and the heat of the day, and into whose labors those young students have entered, are afraid to speak in their presence, lest they should make a mistake, and thereby become objects of ridicule. This is a grievous evil, which many worthy servants of the Lord Jesus have been doomed to writhe under in silent anguish for years.

As extensive learning is not an essential qualification for a gospel ministry, their divine Master has promised to give them a mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. They speak by the authority of God, accompanied with the sacred influence of the Holy Ghost, and their word reaches the sinners' hearts, and becomes the

power of God unto salvation. It is not reasonable to suppose that God calls foolish and improper characters to the work of the ministry; and though they may not have the wisdom or the learning of the world to lean upon, yet have they the more important wisdom which cometh from above, and fully qualifies them to preach the gospel in its purity with power and efficiency. They are taught of the Holy Spirit of God; hence they do not strive about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers; they study to show themselves approved unto God, workmen who need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. It is worthy of notice, that the gospel shines brighter, and God is more glorified, by the ministry of unlearned than of learned men. When Paul (who was known to be a learned man) reasoned powerfully before Festus, he cried out, "Paul, thou art beside thyself, MUCH LEARNING doth make thee mad;" thus giving the praise and glory to LEARNING; but when Peter and John healed the lame man, and preached Christ powerfully to the audience, they gave the glory to God. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were UNLEARNED

and IGNORANT men, they marvelled; and took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

If extensive learning is an essential qualification for a minister of Jesus Christ, and will indeed (as many believe) qualify its possessor to enjoy a higher degree of happiness in heaven, than an ignorant and unlearned man, Christ certainly erred when he delivered the following benediction, accompanied with a most solemn malediction, "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation." There are very few of the poor of this world, who are, or can ever hope to be men of learning, unless it is through the charity of those who are wealthy; while the rich men of this world, are almost uniformly favored with learning; yet hath God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him.

I shall now appeal to the law and to the testimony, by the authority of God's holy word, and that rigidly and faithfully applied, must we all stand or fall. There is not, I apprehend, one plain text in the New Testament, which

proves that earthly learning or wisdom is necessary to qualify a minister of Jesus Christ, for his holy duty. Christ says, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the WISE and PRUDENT, and hast revealed them unto babes, even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Matt. xi, 25, 26. May it not be, that in accordance with this divine declaration, the purity, simplicity, and harmony of the gospel has been "HID" from our D. D's, therefore, division and discord has fallen on the M. E. Church? When John sent his disciples to Jesus to inquire whether He was the Christ or not, the Lord Jesus said, in reply to those messengers, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them." Matt. xi, 4, 5. The poor are not often found among the wise and learned of this world; neither does it require extensive learning to qualify a man to preach the gospel to them. It may be said, "If we are qualified to preach the gospel correctly and

learnedly to the rich, the poor may receive it also." Not so; the poor cannot comprehend or understand the import of many words and phrases in common use among the learned; but on the contrary, if we speak the plain undorned language of propriety, simplicity and the holy scriptures, the rich and learned can fully comprehend the bearing and import of every word and sentiment expressed. Thus the wise and learned individual cannot but with the utmost difficulty obey the command of Jesus Christ—go and preach the gospel to every creature, for they have received a language in the college, which renders them partially barbarians to the ignorant and the unlearned. It will, I apprehend, be generally, if not universally conceded, that the real design of extensive learning is not to qualify us to preach the gospel to the poor and the illiterate, but to the rich and the learned. Were the point conceded, (which is not the case,) that extensive learning is a necessary appendage to qualify us to preach the gospel to the learned and the rich, would it be wise or prudent to qualify every minister, (that too at a considerable expense of money and of time,) to preach to a

portion of the community who are seldom called; and so slender is their hope of salvation, that our divine Master says, that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven—the anathema of our divine Redeemer rests on them—“woe unto you that are rich;” and as it regards this subject, Paul makes the following strong remarks: “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many WISE men after the flesh, not many MIGHTY, not many noble are CALLED: but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the WISE; and God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of this world, and the things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.” 1 Cor. i, 26—28. I cannot conceive how it is possible for any individual possessed of common understanding, to misunderstand the apostle’s argument in the above passage, which will certainly prove anything else, rather than that the learning and wisdom of this world is necessary to qualify a minister of Christ to preach the

gospel. The same Apostle expressly declares that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. Again he says, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." I might transcribe nearly every paragraph in the first, second, and third chapters of Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church, with many other passages interspersed throughout the New Testament, to prove that extensive learning is not necessary to the success of a gospel preacher, but frequently a direct hindrance. I will only advert to the following quotation, to which I must beg the reader's most serious attention. "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech, and my preaching, was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit, and in power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the

power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a ministry, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world, to our glory." Paul was evidently, himself, a learned man; but he laid even his learning down a willing sacrifice at the shrine of his divine Master's cross, together with his other numerous earthly distinctions, and went out, in obedience to the call and command of the Lord Jesus, into the streets and lanes of the city, and into all the world preaching the gospel to the poor and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind; nor did he fail to warn the rich, and the wise of their imminent danger, while he invited them to forsake those vanities, and seek mercy and eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was intimately acquainted with human nature, and also the power and efficacy of divine grace when he said—"Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." As God hates a proud look, should we not feel somewhat afraid of that which has a direct tendency to swell a haughty worm, and thereby render us offensive in the

sight of God? We should dread more than death, any circumstance, or creature, or thing which may by any means turn us from the unfrequented, but honorable path of deep and genuine humility, which always bears the impress of the meek and lowly Saviour's footsteps.

The Lord Jesus asks the important question,—“How can you BELIEVE which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only? In open view of that dangerous error, he carefully guards us against giving or receiving titles of distinction. He says, “The Scribes and Pharisees love greeting in the market, and to be called of men, Rabbi—Rabbi, but be not yet called Rabbi, for one is your Master even Christ, and ye are all brethren. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased.” Now, are not our colleges openly and palpably arrayed against the sentiments and the positive commands of our Lord Jesus Christ? Those institutions of learning deal out carelessly titles of honorable distinction, and many of our leading men in Israel receive them without one objection. O God! the

God of our fathers, arouse the church, and may her strong men of Israel leave the lap of Delilah, and escape from the arms of the god of this world, before the Philistines put out both our eyes.

From the weight of testimony found in the New Testament against extensive learning as a qualification for the ministry, and the little that is said in favor of it, should we not pause, and reflect, and fast and pray for pure light from heaven on this momentous subject? Is it not possible that we may be found on the side of the world, fighting against God, and the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? As the gospel breathes a constant stream of mercy to the poor, and denounces the rich, if we must interfere in the subject of education, should we not rather recommend and encourage schools for the benefit of the poor, something similar to the district schools, now established in most of our states and counties.

Very few except the rich are benefited by our colleges. A poor man cannot pay the board and incidental expenses connected with any of our colleges, were he to receive the tuition gratis. Nor is it reasonable or right in the sight of God,

to receive money from the poor to educate rich men's children. Let the wealthy part of the community and of the church manage their own concerns, while we turn with the blessings of the gospel to the poor; and if their education devolves on the church even in part, let us recommend all our members to give their children a good English education—nay, let us see that it is done; and then teach them (by example and precept) to save the money now wasted for fine clothes, and houses and furniture, and rich food, and live like our Divine Master, a self-denying life in all things; and teach them further, to apply the money thus saved to the purchase of good religious books, including ancient and modern history; and then let all the time now wasted in visiting and idle conversation, be occupied in reading, meditation and prayer. An individual with a good plain English education, and a mind well stored with scripture and historical knowledge, is better prepared to make a good and a useful citizen, than that man who has been polished for years within the walls of a college, and far better prepared to make a good and successful minister of Jesus Christ, when God converts his soul, and fills it with holy zeal and burning love for God and all mankind.

Can our wise and learned men account for the simple, but astounding fact, that in the early days of Methodism, though she was frowned on and despised by the wise and great men of this world, and her preachers were generally unlearned men, yet she fought her way triumphantly through every opposing difficulty to a high and holy eminence in piety, in numbers, and in influence ; and now in these last days, we have raised up colleges and seminaries of learning in abundance, and our learned men, our D. D's abound everywhere, while our beautiful fabric, raised up by the zeal and purity and faith of our unlearned fathers, totters, and God's house is divided in twain, which portends, by divine authority, speedy ruin ; even now discord abounds through our ranks generally north and south ; confidence is fearfully shaken, and the prospect before us, to every pious, rational mind, is anything but prosperous ? May we not lean on the world for support, either its money, its popularity, or its polished learning, but return to the feet of Jesus, and there learn to do our first works over again, that we may live and not die ?

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